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Last issue I talked about manufacturers going out on a stylistic limb, and I guess I am taking that idea to an extreme limit this issue with the picture above. Don't worry though because the magazine is not changing direction and attempting to compete with the likes of Custom Car, but hopefully this image has got your attention!

I took it at this year's Classic Motor Show in Birmingham (see our report on p8 for more on that) on the Meguiar's Club Showcase stand and officially it was listed as a 1924 Singer Sport, but the owner calls it Automatron and he built every incredible detail on it by hand. The word 'stunning' is much in vogue and overused these days, but there really is no other way of describing the quality of detail and the workmanship that went into building this apocalyptic vision.

As for the overall concept, some of you will be appalled by it and others will be applauding the owner's creative skill. Could you drive it on the road? I doubt it, but clearly that was never the point of this exercise. Like concours cars that are no longer transport but have been transformed into automotive works of art, this would have been all about chasing perfection rather than the ultimate driving machine, albeit perfection as defined by some very singular parameters.

The thing is, most people would have gone to this show expecting to see the kind of classic cars they know and love, not something as unique and outlandish as Automatron, and yet the crowds were jostling for viewing space all weekend long. A few of them were quick to express outrage, but the vast majority were entranced by it. To my mind, this kind of unexpected surprise is one of the strengths of an event like this. It also reinforces my belief that you can admire the work and the passion that somebody else has poured into their classic, even if the car itself or what



they've done to it is not to your tastes.

So like the Classic Motor Show, we strive to bring you a good mix of cars each issue ranging from old favourites such as the Morris Minor and Jaguar's E-Type to cars that are, shall we say, a little more niche. This month I would class the Toyota Crown Super Saloon, Fiat 600D, Hyundai Coupé and Bond Equipes in the niche category, and even the Renault 4 is edging that way these days given how few UK cars have survived. There is always room for more though, so whether you have something rare or commonplace, if you are passionate about it then please drop me a few details and a picture or two via

classics.ed@kelsey.co.uk

And finally, still on the subject of unusual cars, we have started a new series this issue featuring original press pictures from manufacturer's archives. We are displaying these alphabetically, which has obviously left us with one or two gaps to fill. So next time you are down the pub with your mates, see how many obscure manufacturers you can come up with. Any beginning with K, Q, U, X, Y or Z would be particularly prized!

SIMON GOLDSWORTHY Email classics.ed@kelsey.co.uk



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CLASSICS JANUARY 2020 Issue 289

POST: Classics Monthly, Kelsey Media, Regent House, Welbeck Way, Peterborough PE2 7WH. **EMAIL:** classics.ed@kelsey.co.uk

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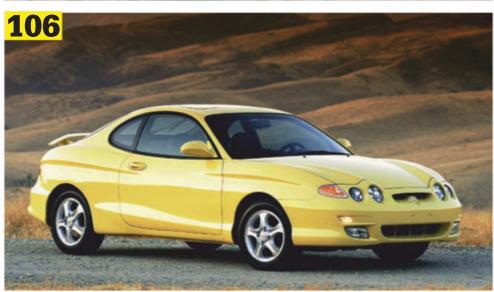
















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WORKSHOP

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Project Morris Minor begins Meet our latest project car, a 1967 two-door Morris Minor 1000 saloon. How – and why – did we end up with this one?

Drivers Diaries Including this issue Mazda MX5 brakes, Stag voltage regulators, Jaguar headlining and Standard Eight seats.

Workshop Q&A Helpdesk Steve Rothwell answers more of your technical questions, this issue ranging from dodgy gauges to reluctant starters.

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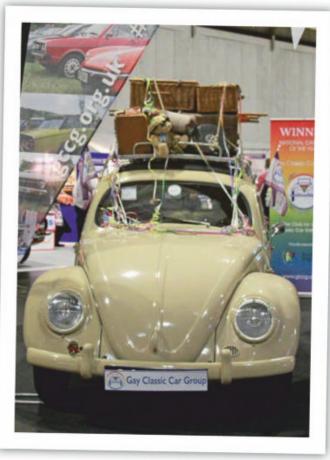
NEC CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW

Another great Classic Motor Show at the NEC has been and gone, this year's event taking place on 8-10 November. The highlights could fill the magazine, so this is just a small selection of things that caught our eye – including of course the MX-5 that we have been running as a project and which Lancaster were giving away after the show. The winner has been drawn and notified - we will have details next issue.

Of the 16 stunning vehicles on the

Meguiar's Club Showcase, it was Dave Rippard's 1959 Morris Mini Minor that received the top honours in one of the closest results to date. The hotly contested Lancaster Insurance Pride of Ownership competition saw 20 diverse cars in the final, but it was Ted Brooke's 1961 Morris Minor Million that visitors voted as the winner, with second place going to Ian Cummins' 1991 Mazda MX-5 while Tahmid Haque's 1988 BMW E30 325i Sport came third.





ABOVE: Well-stacked German market Beetle on the GCCG stand was base spec, but with the most expensive option – a sun roof.

TOP: It might not have been quite as pristine as the Pride of Ownership cars, but the MX-5 was a big attraction on Lancaster's stand.

LEFT: The Ford clubs were gathered in Hall 5, and the line-up of gleaming Mk1 Capris was enough to stop us in our tracks.

HEINKE!

ABOVE: The Heinkel and Trojan owners were celebrating 40 years of their club, and managed to get no fewer than nine superb vehicles on their stand – a benefit of having such small cars!







ABOVE: On the Wolseley Register stand, this C7 16/20 Tourer celebrated its 100th birthday by driving 100 miles to and from the NEC.

ABOVE LEFT: The Lamborghini Club UK grabbed visitors' attention with a near life size bull alongside a 1987 Countach V12.

LEFT: The J Type Register had a fine selection of vans, including this one in Royal Mail livery that looked like it belongs to Postman Pat.



ABOVE: The Leyland Princess Enthusiasts' Club were inundated with visitors – there were two of the wedge Princesses and an Ambassador on their stand somewhere among the crowds!

SVA News





THE SVA CONTINUES TO GROW ITS MEMBERSHIP...

The Specialist Vehicle
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owners and enthusiasts
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enjoys over 7,000 members,
all passionate about this
iconic and very British
manufacturer. Owners of
both classic and collectible
cars are welcome in the club,
including the new Lotus
hyper car the 'Evija' above...

Q: We are a classic club.
Can we join the SVA?
A: Absolutely, the SVA
welcomes all car clubs,
for both classic and
modern collectible cars.
In fact our MD is a member
of Mercedes-Benz Club
with an E-350 125 (W212).
Q: Can actual owners
register and what does
it cost?

A: Nothing! Not a single penny, subscription is FREE for owners, collectors and enthusiasts to join. From November all we need is your name and email, so you can then get a range of discounts and benefits...

For more details contact
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DD: 01243 264056,
Mobile: 07927 212401,
email: martyn@
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ABOVE: Declan Burke only finished restoring his Volvo Amazon 123GT the night before he had to bring it to the NEC for this show.

LEFT: No show is complete without the Michelin man, and this larger than life one was part of Longstone Tyres' display.

BELOW: The Sporting Bears gave around 750 Dream Rides in more than 80 cars, raising just under £30,000 for UK children's charities.



ABOVE: Something different on the National Street Van Association stand – a mobile barrel built originally for Whitakers of Halifax.

BELOW: Glipton's cleaning products were shown off to good effect on Chris Hand's Mini, complete with 130bhp/1293cc engine.

BOTTOM: Not all rarities were particularly exotic - when was the last time you saw a Chrysler Alpine, let alone two of them?









ABOVE: The Historic Marathon Rally Group had an eye-catching display as part of their efforts to publicise the 50th anniversary celebrations of the World Cup Rally at Gaydon on 19th April.



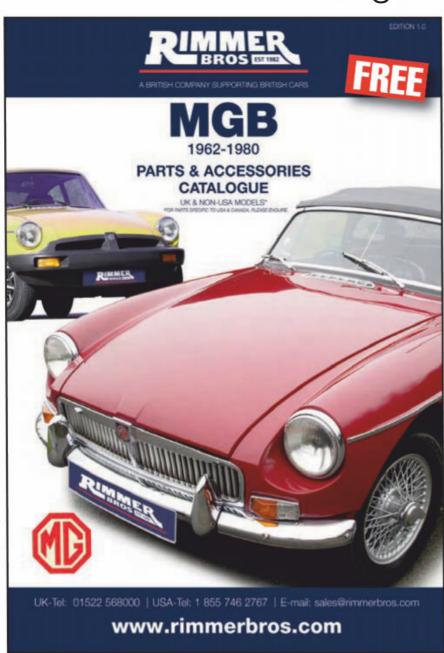
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NEWTON CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

Newton Commercial, the classic car interior trim specialist, have been celebrating their 40th anniversary in 2019. The company founders, Richard and Vera Newton, established the business in 1979 following increasing demand from classic car enthusiasts for original interior trim, and the company now supply interior trim products worldwide, with the export market forming over 40% of their business.

From its humble beginnings when Richard and Vera made trim from their kitchen table at home, Newton now employ almost 60 people in three purpose-built factories in Leiston, Suffolk. With over 25,000 sq.ft. of manufacturing space, Newton handcrafts

trim in original styles, materials and designs for Classic Mini, MG, Triumph, Morris Minor, Porsche, Mazda, Ford and VW.

Jonny Newton, Managing Director, said: 'To celebrate 40 years in business is a brilliant achievement, and we've had great fun celebrating this year with various events. We owe a lot to Richard and Vera for their passion, knowledge and vision. We've grown the business into one of the biggest employers in our region, and I'm really proud of our staff who have made us a great place to work. We hand-make great products, using artisan skills and export it worldwide. It's British manufacturing at its best, here in Suffolk'.

THE REVVING RED CARPET

The Revving Red Carpet expert panel have announced their top 20 tuned cars of 2020. The judging panel included the Director of the Automotive Lifestyle brand SlammedUK, Jordan Clarke, Coventry based car meet 'Dub Club' organiser Ian Cook and Liberty Walk Director, James Pearman. They judged the submitted cars on a range of categories including exterior, interior and mechanical quality as well as taking into account the owners' individualism and technical expertise.

The top 20 will now go to a public vote across the show's social media channels to decide the modified vehicle fans want to see centre stage on the red carpet at the Performance & Tuning Car Show 2020 at Birmingham's NEC on 11-12 January. This is a unique event for enthusiasts of highend modification and tuning. Tickets for the Performance & Tuning Car Show 2020 are also valid for Autosport International and the Live Action Arena, which take place at the same time. Purchase your tickets online at www.autosport international.com/tickets/



THE FUTURE OF HYDRAGAS IS ASSURED

The future of suspension component availability for British Leyland's Hydragas equipped models has now been assured, courtesy of developments by a small company specialising in the recharging of existing Hydragas dampers. Hydragas and Hydrolastic Service Ltd, run by husband and wife team Ian and Daw



Kennedy, has been restoring the ride quality of Allegros, Princesses, Metros, Maxis, MGFs and more since 2014, but as the suitability of units for recharging has depended upon the condition of the internal diaphragm, the long term future for Hydragas was in doubt – once these diaphragms perish, the units leak fluid and were once considered scrap.

However, Ian and Dawn have now completed prototyping and testing of a remanufactured diaphragm, fitted into a once-scrap displacer and tested at up to 700psi of pressure – more than these systems will ever face in day-to-day use. Ian told us: 'Even over bumps the system should never hit more than 500psi across a pair of displacers. That means my testing puts the unit under far more strain than it will ever reach in use. The displacer is an inherently reliable design, and it's only through several years without nitrogen gas that issues can form.'

British Leyland originally projected a 15-year lifespan for displacers, but with many cars using this technology now approaching 40 years old problems aren't far away. 'When the gas has gone, fluid can leak through the crimped join and destroy the seal on the inner diaphragm,' said Ian. 'The ones we have remanufactured fit Allegro, Maxi and Princess displacers, and Princess units can be fitted into an Ambassador. These ensure that even if a displacer is leaking, it can be restored, but we won't replace a diaphragm if a unit is maintaining pressure.' For more information, visit www.hahsltd.co.uk, or phone lan Kennedy on 07506 563081.



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1923 ASTON MARTIN IN ACTION TO MARK 95TH ANNIVERSARY

It was 95 years ago that the Aston Martin which came to be known as Cloverleaf, XR 1981, lined up at the bottom of Aston Hill. One of just eight customer cars built in late 1923, this very early Aston Martin was competing against two Bugattis and two other Aston Martins – one of which had been entered by the company's founder, Lionel Martin, who won on the day.

This four-cylinder, 1486cc, side-valve engined 1923 long-chassis Cloverleafbodied tourer came second at the event, and remains one of only two Bamford and Martin-built Aston Martins from that meeting in 1924 still in existence today. To mark the anniversary of its first competitive outing, Cloverleaf returned to Aston Hill in October this year to be driven by Aston

Martin Racing ace and three time Le Mans class winner Darren Turner, followed closely by a Bugatti to recreate as accurately as possible the events of almost a century ago. The car was painstakingly prepared for its hillclimb return by renowned specialists Ecurie Bertelli, the Midlands-based firm which currently manages the vehicle on behalf of its owner.

Paul Spires, President of Aston Martin Works, said of the anniversary run: 'There are not many brands that are fortunate enough to have as many iconic milestones as Aston Martin. Cloverleaf is a perfect example of how, even from the brand's inauguration, we were racing and competing at the highest level in terms of design and innovation.'

TRAGEDY MARS **BRIGHTON RUN**

Nearly 400 pioneering veteran cars, their drivers and passengers gathered in Hyde Park on Sunday 3rd November for the start of the Bonhams London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. It is now more than 120 years since the original Emancipation Run, which was held in 1896 to celebrate the recently passed Locomotives on Highways Act which raised the speed limit for 'light locomotives' from 4mph to 14mph and abolished the need for a man to walk ahead waving a red flag. Expressing that new found freedom, the annual Run always commences with the symbolic tearing of the red flag – a pre-dawn ritual this year performed by well-known TV personality and classic car enthusiast Alan Titchmarsh together with Ben Cussons, Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club.

In total, 120 different marques ranging from Adler (built in Frankfurt, Germany) to Yale (from Toledo in Ohio, US) were

represented on this year's Run – some, like Cadillac, Renault, Vauxhall and Mercedes still well-known today, but the vast majority long since forgotten. Many cars and crews sported moustaches in support of Movember, the event's official Charity Partner. Nearly 90% of the starters made it to Brighton before the 4.30pm deadline to claim a coveted finishers' medal.

Sadly this year's event was marred by tragedy when one participant was killed after taking a wrong turn and finding himself off the route and on the busy M23 motorway. About a mile into the unfortunate diversion, the 1903 Knox Runabout Old Porcupine suffered a collision with an HGV. The 80-year old driver, Ron Carey, was thrown from the vehicle and died at the scene. The female passenger, believed to be his wife, was also severely injured in the incident but survived to be air-lifted to hospital for recovery.

NO SUPPORT FOR ELECTRIC

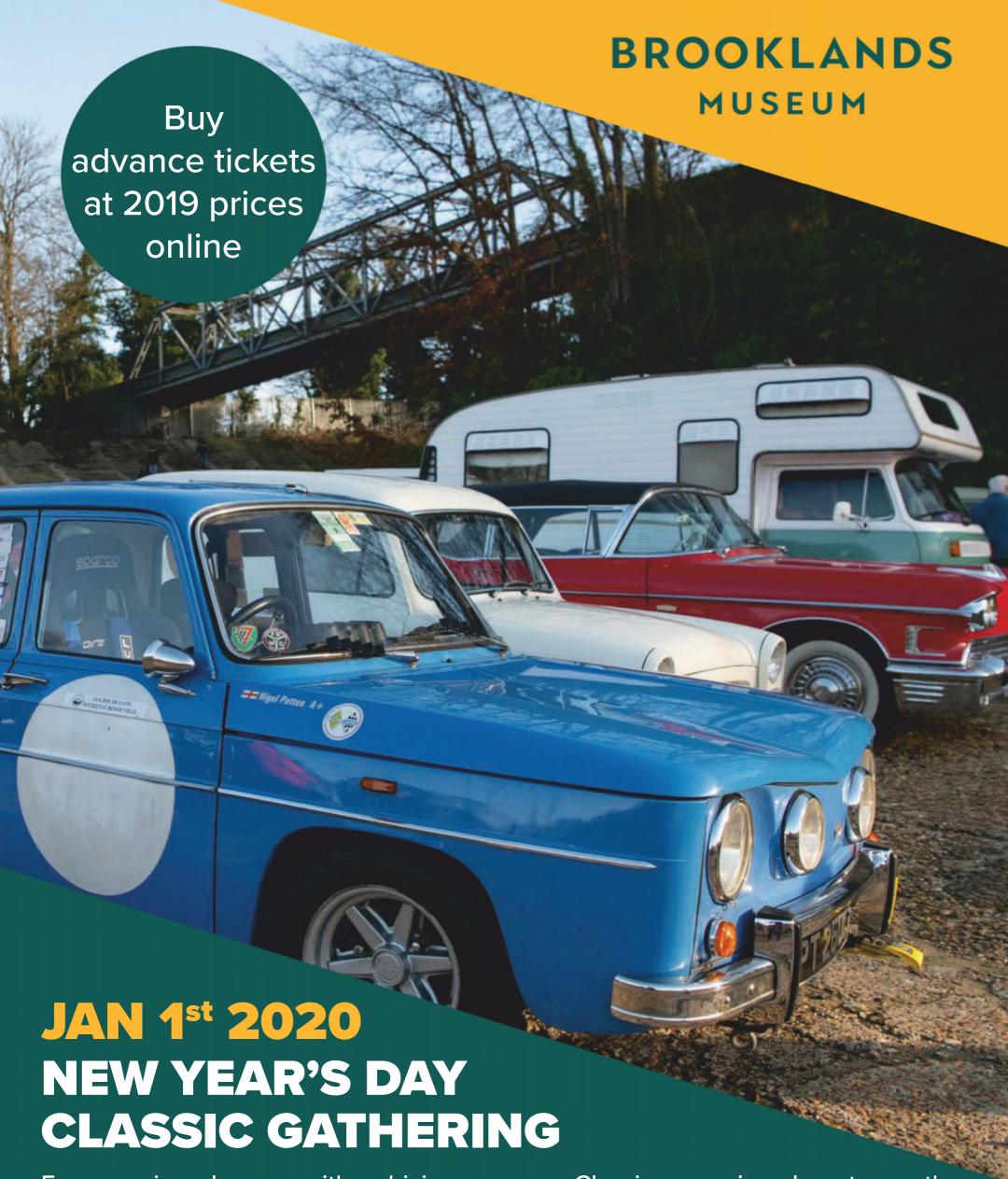
FIVA (the International Federation of Historic Vehicles) has issued a statement clarifying its position regarding the conversion of classic cars to electric propulsion. In the statement they said: 'An increasing number of commercial outfits are offering to convert historic vehicles to run on electric power, replacing the entire drivetrain with an electric unit and batteries. In this way, they claim, it's possible to retain the classic appearance of the vehicle while meeting modern environmental standards. As an additional benefit, the conversion might also increase power and performance. Some conversion companies have even obtained permission from the authorities to retain the original Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) of the donor vehicle, despite more or less replacing the entire drivetrain.

'FIVA understands the motivation of some owners to electrify their vehicles - and acknowledges that, subject to legislation and regulation, all modifications are a matter of personal choice. However FIVA, as an organisation dedicated to the preservation, protection and promotion of historic vehicles, cannot promote to owners or regulators the use of modern EV components (motors and batteries) to replace a historic vehicle's powertrain. Conversion of historic vehicles from their original internal combustion engines to electric power doesn't comply with the FIVA definition of a historic vehicle, nor does it support the goal of preserving historic vehicles and their related culture. In FIVA's view, vehicles so converted cease to be historic vehicles, unless they are subject only to 'in period' changes.'

According to FIVA, a historic vehicle is a mechanically propelled road vehicle that's:

- at least 30 years old
- preserved and maintained in a historically correct condition
- not used as a means of daily transport
- part of our technical and cultural

Tiddo Bresters, FIVA's Vice President, Legislation, concluded: 'It is not, in our opinion, the shape or body style of a vehicle that makes it historic, but the way in which the entire vehicle has been constructed and manufactured in its original form. Hence if any owner, motor engineer or manufacturer chooses to make such conversions to a historic vehicle, FIVA would strongly recommend that any changes are reversible, with all the original components safely stored. In this way the vehicle may – if so desired in the future – be returned to its original state and may once again become a historic vehicle.'



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artwork on the cover but are blank inside. If you are in the area, visit their shop at 40 Church Street, Rugby CV21 3PU. Alternatively, you can browse and buy online at www.industryandsupply.com



THE GREAT BRITISH RALLY **RAC TO RALLY GB - THE COMPLETE STORY**

By Graham Robson and Martin Holmes

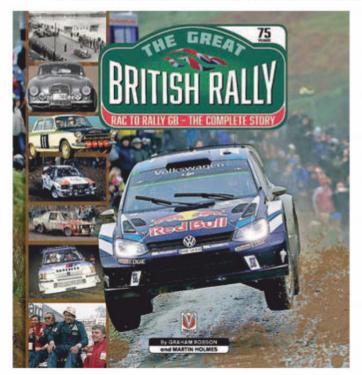
Hardback, 245mm x 245mm, 224 pages, 317 colour images. www.veloce.co.uk

Covering the running of the 1932 RAC rally, (which was mainly a social event,) to the present day when Rally GB is a high-speed endurance World Championship rally, this is the very first all-embracing history of an important part of British motorsport history. Descriptions of every event, opinions, results and images are brought together for the very first time, including rare illustrations, route maps, detailed year-on-year results and personal memories of the event.

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Price: Various

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The MGB Hive are also offering deals on the oil combined with a new filter. And if you are buying for a loved one this Christmas and are not sure of the exact item they need, you can buy gift cards with values ranging from £10 to £100. To get yours, head over to Marshalls Bank, Parson Drove, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 4JE, call 01945 700500 or shop at www.mgbhive.co.uk



AUSTIN 8 @ 80 DVD

Price: £12.95 (including free p&p in the UK)

● Total run time: 75 minutes

■ Exempt from classification ■ No region code applied John Clancy is best known for his Triumph DVDs, but the range is growing ever more extensive. This latest offering focuses on the Austin 8, a car introduced in 1939 and replaced by the Austin A40 Dorset and Devon in 1947. The Austin 8 has often failed to register on the radar of enthusiasts, but like any other classic it has a band of enthusiastic followers, and this DVD is based around their celebration of its 80th anniversary in the summer of 2019. This gives it a delightfully gentle air that belies the quality of the filming. It also includes some great period footage, plus a detailed focus on JOY 1 – the pedal car based on the Austin 8 that was the prototype for the Austin J40. The DVD is available from www.triumphdvd.co.uk



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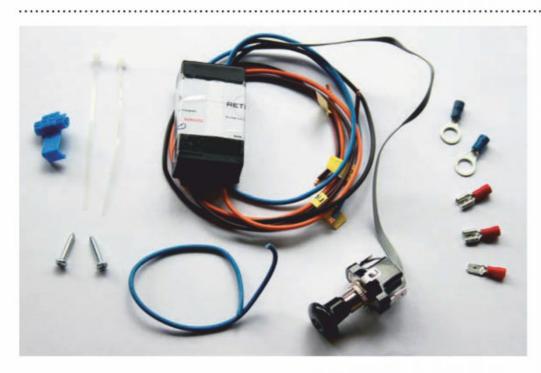
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MORE ON THOSE AUSSIE MOKES

I loved the story on the Mokes in the October issue (being a Moke owner myself for over 37 years). It was good to read an article on the Moke that got it mostly correct. My one comment for correction is that the Australian army did not order 800 Mokes. They bought a total of 316 Mokes, supplied in five batches between 1973 and 1980, plus the eight supplied for tropical trials testing between 1969 and 1970. I have a detailed history of the Australian army Mokes, as well as a list of all chassis

numbers and when they were bought and sold. Here are a couple of pictures of the sole survivor still owned by the army, in one of its museums and in completely original and unmolested condition, along with its specially-built trailer. They made 90 of these trailers because the BMCsupplied unit was completely unsuitable. Interestingly, although none of the Mokes were used in combat roles or off-road, the trailers can be sealed to float.

Craig Watson

STAGGERING STAG NUMBERS

In December's issue, you correctly state that the Stag's survival rate is guite remarkable. However, a closer look at the figures shows that it is even more remarkable than you think. Of the 25,939 built, UK sales only totalled 17,819. If over 8000 are still listed by the DVLA in the UK, this means that not too far short of half of all the UK registered Stags are still in existence!

I've been closely involved with Stags for much of my life, with all of my career being in the car industry. Being a Triumph service receptionist when Stags were on sale wasn't an easy job, as you can probably imagine. Despite having subsequently worked at Citroën UK's HQ for 30 years, my love of Stags never diminished and, since taking early

retirement ten years ago, I've restored my own Stag and worked at restoring guite a few others. But coming back to the original subject of my email, what I find truly amazing is the number of Stags surviving bearing in mind how many have been broken. For example, a good friend of mine used to run a workshop that specialised in Stags, and in addition to five complete engines, he's got around 16 window frames, four complete dashboards and a vast number of other components. And he's not alone – I know of several people who seem to have a massive amount of Stag parts from broken cars, and yet there remains that surprisingly large number still registered.

Julian Leyton

IT'S CELTIC, NOT ROMAN

Regarding your feature in the December issue concerning the Ford Escort Mk3, the article describes the colour as Roman Bronze, but that is a much darker colour used on the Mk2 Escort. The colour of this car is Celtic Bronze, a Ford colour with the code 72 which should be on the colour code box on the front slam panel. Note too that Ford Aztec Bronze looks very similar, at least on the internet, but seems to have been used in 1981, not 1982. Also the Classics World article dated 25th October 2019 describes the colour as Celtic Bronze.

Jim Rayment

Thank you for that correction, Jim. I am not sure how the error crept in, but wrists have been slapped and it won't happen again - Ed



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GRAHAM ROBSON

LIVING WITH THE RS200

ay back in 1989, the very last of the 200 Ford RS200s (which had originally been designed to make the most of Group B rally regulations) was sold. Before long, the entire programme, which had always been based at Ford's Competition Centre at Boreham airfield in Essex, was gracefully wound up, after which the focus was on Sierra Cosworth 4x4s – and soon, on the first of the Escort RS Cosworths.

Even today, though, I'm happy to recall that I have been one of the fortunate few to whom the RS200 was a part of my daily life for four glorious years. In short, from early 1985 when I first drove a prototype car, through April 1987 when I took over my first RS200 road car, and to January 1991 when the last of four RS200s was returned to Ford, an RS200 was my daily driver - not just a toy for occasional use, but the car I drove every day.

So, how did it happen? Really by chance, for in the mid-1980s I was working on a variety of marketing and promotional contracts for Ford Motorsport, and was using a Sierra XR4x4 of my own to build up a considerable mileage. Ford was looking for someone to start using an RS200 as their normal transport – cold or hot, dry or wet, early or late, in the countryside or in

heavy traffic – to build up mileage that their engineers would find instructive.

The first of four cars which I was given was a rather tired looking left-hand-drive machine registered C142 JJN. This had been a Boreham test car, and had already built up a lot of development and testing mileage, including two visits to and from the high-speed track at Nardo in the very south of Italy. In total contrast, the three others were all brand-new when handed over. The first three of this RS200 quartet were in the standard white colour, while the fourth (which I kept for two years) was in Ferrari Rosso Red. Except for local shopping trips (and even then they were sometimes pressed into use) these RS200s were driven each and every time I needed to go somewhere.

Except for the fact that arranging visits for regular servicing (and yes, I'd better admit it – to arrange for repairs as well) could be tedious, my local garage got used to seeing me queue for 98 Octane Super fuel at the pumps, and there were even occasions when my cars were mistaken for 'specials.' On one occasion, many miles from home, the young man running the cash desk at a garage assured me that 'I like your kit car, guv, but my mate has a Rover-engined Lamborghini Countach replica which will see it off, no problem.' I didn't have the heart to mention



my RS200's four-wheel-drive, four-wheel disc brakes, 250bhp in standard road trim from the mid-mounted turbocharged Ford-Cosworth BDT engine and the guarantee of country-wide service! But if country-wide service was available, why did I describe arranging visits as tedious? My problem was that I was living (and still live there) in deepest Dorset, Boreham was 200 miles away, and Aston Martin Tickford (who had refurbished all these cars before delivery) were in Bedworth north of Coventry, and since I had to return there it meant that routine visits had to be planned well ahead.

And then there was the need to care for these cars like thoroughbreds. Starting from cold was never a problem, though they then had to drive very gently for the first ten minutes until all the vital fluids had warmed up, for otherwise the engine oil pressure was far too high and an oil pipe split was possible. At the same time, it helped to talk nicely to the FF Developments-engineered transmission, for the gear change was very heavy while the transmission fluids were still cold. As for the clutch – oh yes, I remember the clutch well! With three plates and intended to withstand competition use, it was definitely of the In-Out variety. The first time out I stalled the car, the second time I stalled the car again – but after that I learned that there were ways. However, if I got into one today, for sure I would stall it again!

As for problems with the cars, yes they had a noisy interior, appallingly bad ventilation, poor rear-view provision and nowhere to stow anything. And – I think the statute of limitations has run out now and I can admit it – in four years mine popped two engines with cam belt failures (both at low speeds, so there was no internal damage), and one main transmission failure.

Even so, I almost shed a tear when my red one, car no.192 which had completed 48,000 miles, had to be handed back and I made the journey home in a Sierra Cosworth 4x4. The fact was that after 85,000 miles of RS200 ownership spread across four years, I was still in love with the breed, and wished I could have afforded to buy that last car. To this day, I still miss it.



The RS200 was developed as a pure-bred rally car after attempts to create a RWD rally variant of the FWD Mk3 Escort came to nothing. With a fibreglass body and mid-mounted engine, some people mistook it for a kit car. Graham didn't have the heart to disillusion one chap who thought his mate's Rover-engined Countach replica would be able to show the Ford a clean pair of heels.







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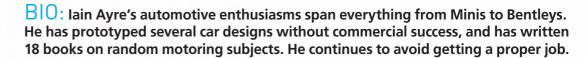
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IAIN AYRE

IT'S A 20 MINUTE JOB

ne of life's great pleasures is the abuse of one's most treasured friends. I'm not talking about bullying, but cheery, clever, entertaining and secretly sympathetic cruelty-free cruelty. Genuine banter, without any destructive undercurrent, purely for the fun of mental swordplay.

Once a torture weapon has been developed, it can become funnier with each repeated stab. For example, a friend of mine lives partly in LA and partly in Washington State. He's an expat British screenwriter, and for fun he spanners on old British cars comprising an Austin Ten, an Austin Seven and a MkVI Bentley. He's spiritually a prewar man, the Bentley having come into his life more or less accidentally. He's been in Los Angeles for a long time, and noticed in the 1990s that non-rusty MkVI Bentleys were very rare in the UK, but sometimes available in bone-dry California. He would buy them when he came across them, ship them to a friend to sell in the UK and split the proceeds. He couldn't bring himself to send this one though, and it became family. He proposed to his wife in it, so she wouldn't let him sell it now anyway.

His Bentley is a beauty, with low miles and the most spectacular woodwork. He had been under the impression that the wood man was doing the refinishing in the evenings, but it turned out to have been several weeks of professional full-time work, involving a breath-taking invoice. Dazzled by the shine, Steve cheerfully paid

up, and the clubhouse of his Bentley is now so magnificent that it made me want to sell my own less perfect MkVI.

regard to its septuagenarian ancientness, and hammers it up and down 1500 miles of Interstate 5 simply expecting the Bentley to deal with this, which it normally does with both élan and panache. Then it developed a slight misfire. At the time, I was working on a project 1950 Silver Wraith rolling chassis, now evolving into a magnificent Art Deco boat-tailed two-seater, but at the time the Wraith mechanicals were being taken apart for inspection. There are 39 head studs on the straight-six engines shared between 1940s/1950s Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, and these steel studs pass through and hold down an aluminium cylinder head on a cast iron block. My Wraith engine had been stored bone dry between 1976 and 2014, and getting the head off was simply a matter of undoing the rocker shaft and head studs, giving the head a few taps with a soft mallet and pulling it off.

Steve called. 'How long does it take to get the head off one of those Bentley engines?' he asked. 'I want to have look at the valves.' My reply was reassuring: 'Twenty minutes, it's a piece of cake.'

Steve's engine had been full of coolant during the 40 odd years that my engine had been stored dry. You're supposed to decoke the MkVI engine every few years which involves regularly removing the head, but of course nobody had. The alloy cylinder

Steve drives Mr. B the Bentley without



Removing the head from a MkIV Bentley engine? Why, it's a 20 minute job, of course!



head had probably been corroding in place for 60 years, and Steve spent six months sporadically trying to get it off. Take the head nuts off and rev the engine? Nothing. Use the 4000lb weight of the car to pull the head off? It just laughed at him. He made a massively thick steel device using enormous leverage against the studs to force the head off. It bent. So he called me. 'Twenty minutes? Twenty *!?**@* minutes? *!?* you and *!?* your twenty minutes.'

As this wasn't happening to me, it was very funny. Any time the concept of time came up in any conversation was another opportunity for a twist of the knife. 'How far is the pub/border/whatever?' The answer's obviously 20 minutes, every time. In the end Steve took the engine to local RR club guru Tom Mellor who, with a full engineering workshop at his disposal, took eight hours to get the head off – he had to drill each of the 39 studs out all the way to the bottom, and even then the head fought every inch. He said it was the worst fight he'd ever had with a Rolls/Bentley engine.

'It took longer than 20 minutes, then?' I asked innocently. '*!?* you,' said Steve. But it gets better. I bought a rescue Bentley from Tom, and went to collect its original engine, which had been replaced with a 4.9 Silver Cloud engine. I decided to take the cylinder head off the original engine at Tom's place in case it turned nightmarish, and invited Steve along to witness this and to enjoy the pleasure of some karma payback. The head came off in 20 minutes.

Sadly, the reason for the piece-ofcake 20-minute head removal was that somebody had already opened it up, looked inside and decided just to find another engine. Still, Steve's face when the head popped off at minute 20 was a picture. The final moment of joy was when I started taking the head off the 4.9 engine in the car. He didn't even stick around to watch. 'Those are bolts, not studs, you *!?*. It'll come off in 20 *!?**@* minutes.'

It did, of course. But then you already knew that, didn't you?

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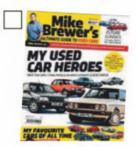


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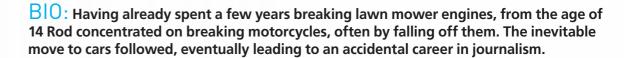
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ROD KER

STORAGE WARS

s fellow DIY mechanics out there will be all too aware, proceedings often grind to a halt when an essential part or tool goes AWOL. This is particularly annoying when you are absolutely certain that said object is definitely somewhere in the vicinity, but you can't remember the precise location of that somewhere. Annoyance turns to exasperation and indignity as you stomp around muttering the back garden mechanics' mantra: 'But it must be here!'

So you search again, even though you've looked everywhere five times, including in the cardboard boxes with the bottoms that fall out when picked up and the drawer crammed with ancient spark plugs that have absolutely no practical use. At this point there's a danger you'll turn into Basil Fawlty and give your car a damn good thrashing with a tree branch.

I almost reached that stage quite recently with a vanished collection of socket spanners. Eventually I had to conclude that I'd accidentally thrown them away. As unlikely as that seemed, there was no other explanation unless the Starship Enterprise transporter used Whitworth threads. Of course, some time later when I'd bought replacements and didn't need the originals, I found the disappearing sockets while looking for another lost cause. Well, who would have thought: 'I wonder if that collection of imperial sockets might possibly be in an oily bag and stuck by magnetism inside a (metric) Suzuki generator...?' Call me silly, but it was not a thought that occurred to me.

You might be surprised to learn that my hoard is actually rather smaller and more accessible than it was 10 or 15 years back.

After a space crisis (and not of the Starship Enterprise sort) my junk, for want of a better word, was spread across four different addresses. If something did go missing, that obviously made it at least four times more difficult to find as I blundered through historic artefacts miles from shed moi.

Quite apart from the impracticality of the situation, this was never intended to be anything other than a temporary arrangement. And since bodgers can't be choosers, when the various owners needed the space for their own purposes, I and my paraphernalia were out. As an alternative solution, grandiose plans were hatched to shift everything into a shared workshop unit.

That never happened, and nor did renting a rickety barn on the edge of the Peak District. Possibly a lucky escape, that one, because it took an hour to get there from my home even before the snow started. But what really knocked this idea on the head was that as is often the case in the old vehicle world, the sums didn't add up. Why spend £x per month to store something when that is a large chunk of its actual value? Sad though it was, the sensible course of action involved flogging all the large pieces such as cars and bikes, and dumping the rest on my parents' herbaceous border. Obviously, they weren't thrilled to bits with this, worried how it might affect their chances of having Monty Don drop by with the Gardeners' World film crew.

Rounding up the strays, both my Morris Minor and one of my Vitesses had spent some time living under canvas. That is fine for boy scouts, but from first-hand experience I know that it is not so hot for old cars. Forget tarpaulins – they are too heavy

Storing his Herald outside is not ideal, but at least that means Rod can find it when he needs it!



and damage the paint, mirrors, wipers, etc. Conversely, most lightweight covers fall off and fly into the trees as soon as the first decent wind blows. If you do manage to lash a large sheet of PVC down to the gunwales, it'll probably still flail around and rip.

As a Herald owner, I'm also painfully aware that cars with sharp edges often suffer the spinnaker effect. Depending on the type of material, a tiny tear can develop into a massive run, like an XXL pair of great grandma's favourite stockings. Next stop the bin, because you definitely can't effect a repair with duct tape and superglue (to the cover, not granny's stockings). Yes, I've tried.

Weather from above is one thing, but leaving a car on a soft surface like a lawn certainly isn't clever either, and you can cover it all you like from the elements but damp is still going to rise up from below and wreak havoc with its nether regions. However, the quickest way to wreck any vehicle is to park it on the coast, where it will be gradually salted and sand-blasted to death. After a few years of this there will be nothing much left except for a Bakelite horn push. OK, I exaggerate slightly, but despite the song, old car owners really don't like to be beside the seaside.

In the absence of a heated garage or a plane ticket with unlimited baggage allowance to sunny California, the best way to store a valuable vehicle is in an inflatable chamber. This is essentially a transparent bubble with a sealed floor that is kept pumped full of dehumidified air. It's also lightly pressurised to keep the walls clear of the vehicle, and can incorporate a trickle charger to keep the battery topped up.

Apart from making your neighbours think you're doing a re-make of *Invasion* of the Bodysnatchers, the downer is that this kind of storage chamber takes up a lot of space, and you need a decent garage in which to erect it. When not in use, you also need quite a lot of space to store it. I know, because I had one for evaluation many moons ago. True to form, I then lost it. Sadly, by the time it materialised again, it had been attacked by mice.



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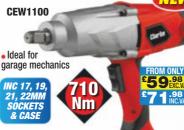
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550 / 16	£229.00	£274.80	4
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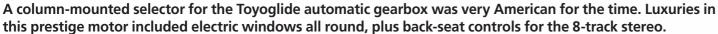
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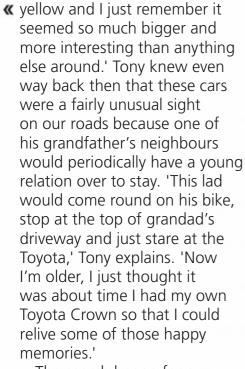




READERS' CARS TOYOTA CROWN







The search began for a Crown by looking in the classic classifieds where one or two would crop up now and then, mostly from warmer climes like Greece. That was a bit too far away for a shopping trip, but eventually the car you see in these pictures was advertised for sale in the UK at an importer up in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Time to send an emissary in the form of Tony's dad to go and have a look. The car was listed for sale at £8995, and with a reasonable report back from dad the deal was done at £7995, including a supply of Waxoyl the importer was going to use on the car. Dad drove the car back home to the Wirral – well some of the way at least, because

unfortunately it overheated due to an unforeseen water pump leak. Not best pleased, dad and the Toyota completed the trip courtesy of the AA. Thankfully the leak was caused by nothing more serious than a serviceable seal, and the Toyota was soon up and running again.

Once he got the car to his home, Tony sat in it for the first time and knew he had done the right thing as memories from his childhood came rushing back. 'Although I was way too young to have driven grandad's car back then,' Tony recalls, 'I can remember the noise that the brake pedal made each time it was pressed and amazingly this car makes exactly that







noise too. All the memories just came flooding back.' Isn't it wonderful that something as simple as that can create such an emotional response?

The history of the car is unfortunately very slim indeed. The only hint of the car's past is a document showing that the original owner lived in Tokyo and that he kept the car for 46 years! That length of time is quite unusual for a Japanese



READERS' CARS TOYOTA CROWN









resident to own a car. In Japan a car has to undergo a rather stringent form of MoT called Shaken once the car is three years old. After that, the test is repeated every two years until the car reaches 13 years old, after which it needs to be done every year. Also, once a car reaches ten years old, all the taxes paid for the car increase by 10%. So anyone owning a car for 46 years must have really liked it, because it would have become increasingly more difficult to get it through the Shaken and would have been

more expensive to keep. This is all the more remarkable when you realise that the Tokyo owner covered only 50,000 miles over the whole ownership period. Quite remarkable.

After such an emotional reunion, it was time for Tony to look into what the 1971 Crown Super Saloon needed. Errm, well it would appear not an awful lot. The bodywork was exceptionally strong with no obvious damage. The chrome too was in pretty good nick, and because it is original and only showing the

merest amount of patina, it just emphasised the total originality of the car and so will stay.

The paintwork wasn't as shiny as you see it now and needed some careful cutting back before applying a top coat of quality polish. Interior-wise the cloth bench seat up front had received a fair bit of wear. Tony relates: 'The portion of the front seat where you actually sit was pretty worn out, but the fabric is impossible to match in the UK. I had a guy re-upholster the centres with a suitable plain coloured fabric, but the rears

are more of a problem.'

That's because the top edge of the rear seat has been exposed to nearly 50 years of sunlight and it has faded and decayed to the point of falling apart. When you look at the pattern, you can understand why Tony can't get a match. 'I'm either going to repeat what I've done with the front, or seek out a better back seat from another Crown from somewhere,' he says. Good luck with that one, Tony!

The engine and threespeed Toyoglide automatic transmission was checked out and found to need only a service, which saved Tony a lot of heartache and expense. The motor is the M series 2-litre six-cylinder that was reserved for the Japanese home market, whereas the engines in those actually destined for sale in the UK had the larger capacity 2.6-litre unit. This was perhaps one of the reasons why the car remained a rarity in this country as both engines are a little thirsty, but then again perhaps it was the styling, which is at the very least rather unusual.

New Zealand and Australia seem to be reasonable sources for 1970s Toyota bits. Both countries had imported them, and some manufacturing went on too under licence over the years. It's strange though that



Engines were 1998cc in Japan and 2253cc for some export markets, but only ever 2563cc in the UK. The Crown weighed nearly 1½ tons, so progress was stately with a 0-60mph time of 14.1 secs and top speed of 90mph.

|READERS' CARS TOYOTA CROWN

Toyota's foray with this model into the US market didn't go so well, particularly as I think there's quite an American look to the whole car. Especially the front end – slightly Dodge Challenger, perhaps? And that centrally located petrol filler hidden behind a flap in the rear panel is certainly taken from the American cars of the time.

OK. so I harked on at the start about how different and forward thinking these cars were compared with our own illustrious automotive offerings of the time, but I don't feel I have really proved it to you yet, so sit back and bask in some quite remarkable features that you'd be pleased to have today, never mind in 1971.

The styling for a start is a striking comparison to the UK's favoured vehicles. That lovely stepped bonnet is unique and.

for me, glorious, while the flush bumpers and rear light arrangement all seem light years ahead. Open the driver's door and you'll straight away notice the controls for the electric windows, front and back no less, (all of which still work by the way). You may have found something similar in a 1971 Mercedes perhaps, but not in an Austin 1100 or a Maxi.

The dashboard is far more futuristic than most too. Again, you can't help but see the American influence here as the deep-set dials in the main binnacle and the column shift for the autobox are all Detroit-esque. All the controls seem to

have been really thought about as regards their position and function. Even

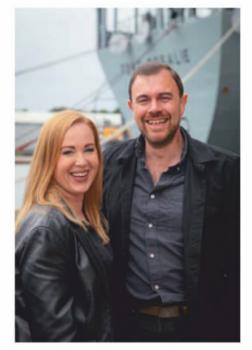
the key-operated ignition has a trick up its sleeve – turn it back all the way to the left and the boot pops open. Cute and very clever. Imagine posing with that feature in front of your neighbour while he's washing his Morris Marina, he'd be green with envy.

Comfort gadgetry is not reserved for the driver only, either. The rear passengers can control the 8 track stereo from a small panel in a little console mounted into the rear of the front seat. If your passengers are not into a bit of T-Rex or Showaddywaddy and fancy a read instead, the rear

> pillars are home to a pair of very nifty recessed reading lights. The Top Trumps of all the fancy bits though has to be the fridge in the boot. Yes, a fridge! Not huge admittedly, but big

enough to hold a few cans of Dandelion and Burdock and some Curlywurlys, and certainly big enough to brag about. All these luxuries would be at home in a Rolls or Bentley, and here they are in a Japanese four-door family saloon.

Let me be perfectly honest though, because I guess I'm not comparing like with like, am I? Certainly the Toyota Crown was at the more expensive



Tony Challanor-Baker and his long-suffering partner, Gaynor.

end of the saloon market, and therefore out of the reach of your average Hillman Avenger or Austin Maxi owner. It was aimed more towards the Ford Granada driver at least. It was after all the flagship model for the manufacturer in Japan, and was revered as such. Not so much here though, unfortunately. Maybe those Americanised looks were just a little much for our sensitivities at the time, which is a shame.

As for me, I really like those looks. In my eyes they represent that leap forward and break with tradition that I've come to enjoy and expect in my cars. As for Tony of course, that appreciation runs so much deeper. He's happy to keep this car running and in the best condition he can to enjoy its looks, its gadgets and of course those glorious memories of days out with his grandad.



Manufacturers found a number of places to hide the fuel filler over the years – behind the number plate was a popular choice at one time.



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READERS' CARSMINI vs FIAT 600



he year is 1959, and you are attending the London Motor Show in search of your first new small car, as your salary can endure the 'nevernever' hire purchase payments. The first exhibits to catch your eye are the new BMC twins, the Morris Mini-Minor and the Austin Seven. 'From bumper to bumper, there is more brilliance per square inch than any other car ever built,' proclaims the brochure. The sales copy further promises a cabin that is tailored 'like a top hat!' and that 'you'll rub your eyes in disbelief when you see how much luggage she carries and you'll clap your hands with joy at the beautifully effortless ride this amazing motor-car gives you.'

Yes, this could be the ideal vehicle, one that demonstrates your inner avant-garde nature beneath the sports jacket or the twin-set. You may not be quite sure how a sideways engine actually functions, but the Mini-Minor and the Seven do fulfil BMC's promise that it









READERS' CARS MINI vs FIAT 600







results in 'heaps more room for family comfort.' However, while looking around Earls Court, it becomes increasingly apparent that the latest offerings from the British Motor Corporation have few domestic rivals. Neither Vauxhall nor the Rootes Group make a small car, while the Anglia 105E is both larger than a Mini and features styling that is a tad Flash Harry for your liking.

Meanwhile, the Triumph
Herald is tempting but rather
too expensive, while the Ford
Popular 100E is cheap but too
Spartan. The Citroën Bijou,
Slough's two-door interpretation
of the 2CV, is intriguing but
the GRP bodywork looks too
delicate, and you do prefer a
floor-mounted gear lever. In
fact our consumer is rapidly
concluding that if the Mini



proves to be too radical, he or she will have to consider taking the bold step of purchasing an overseas built vehicle. After considering the Goggomobile TS400 ('too small') and the Volkswagen Beetle ('too dated'), the alternative to the Mini seems to be the Fiat 600.

And so today, the 1960 Austin Seven owned by Tanya Field vies for garage space with Tommy Cerrone's 1964 Fiat 600D. The name of the British



The A-series engine delivered 37bhp in this 848cc transverse guise. In a Mini Seven weighing 1340lb, it took 29.6 seconds to reach 60mph.

car is a reminder of how BMC hoped to reassure any motorist who was nonplussed by the transverse engine, the apparent lack of a boot and those 10in wheels by using a familiar name from the company's past. They had briefly attempted the same marketing tactic with the A30 in 1951 with an equal lack of success, and by January of 1962 the Seven badging was finally abandoned on the Mini. Before that happened, back in 1959 Autocar thought: 'There is good reason to believe that these new cars will be able to better even the remarkable records of the two small car series after which they are named.'

The Mini was available in both Morris and Austin forms until late 1969, a result of BMC retaining separate chains of dealerships long after its formation in 1952. There were different radiator grilles, brochures and choices of colour - Speedwell Blue, Tartan Red or Farina Grey for the Seven and Cherry Red, Old English White or Clipper Blue for the Mini-Minor. There were even two promotional films: Wizardry On Wheels for Cowley devotees and The Incredible Seven for Longbridge aficionados, with the same cast, much the same narration and duplication of scenes in outer suburbia and the Port of Dover.

Regardless of marque name, the Mini offered quite remarkable value for money. Christy Campbell notes in her splendid work *Mini: An Intimate* »



A Fiat 600D made do with just 29bhp from its 767cc, four-cylinder engine. In a car weighing 1351lb, it would reach 68mph – eventually!

READERS' CARS MINI vs FIAT 600









A parcel shelf instead of a conventional dash was one of the tricks that made a Mini feel amazingly spacious given the tiny exterior footprint. And who can forget the toggle switch extensions so you could reach them!

Biography that the average male manual worker (1959 was another world) earned just over £13 per week, but a De Luxe cost just £537 6s 8d. The specification included windscreen washers, opening rear windows, a heater, ashtrays fore and aft, a carpeted floor and upholstery in duo-tone leathercloth. Our test car, which goes by the nom-de-Mini of Speedy, has been owned by Tanya since August 2007.

'She was built within the first year of sales, and my husband Jason and myself had wanted an early Mk1 in Speedwell Blue for many years,' she says. 'Speedy was roadworthy (but only just), with an MoT and most parts there bar the interior. She had covered a mere 600 miles in the previous ten years, was remarkably unmodified but was clearly in need of serious work.'

Somerford Mini (www. somerfordmini.co.uk) restored Speedy between December 2008 and June 2009, and the Fields spent many hours scouring autojumbles, eBay and the classifieds looking for original parts for her. They still regard it as a work in progress, and reckon that among the most enjoyable aspects of Mini Mk1 ownership are the looks they get when they are out and about in her, and that she brings back memories to people – the sound of the A-series engine and the sight of the floormounted starter button and the flashing indicator stalk have the power to take people back to a time of square-bottomed ties and The Shadows playing Apache on a coffee bar jukebox.

By contrast, the grey 600 is a reminder that when the Mini range made its bow, driving

'one of those foreign cars' was guaranteed to prompt mutterings of disapproval from certain neighbours; just think of Thora Hird in A Kind of Loving. However, at a time when fewer than 10% of new cars in the UK were imported, Fiat was unusual in having an extensive network of dealers and offering a wide choice of models.

Some classic enthusiasts may consider the Nuova 500, which made its bow in 1957, to be the logical alternative to the Mini, but in reality it was a different form of machine an urban 2+2 for those Vespa riders who wanted to graduate to four wheels. For anyone who required four seats and at least vestigial accommodation for luggage, the logical choice was the 600. With a car that potentially allowed you to 'bowl along happily between

hedges bursting into green' (modern sales copy is so staid by comparison with advertisements of the late 1950s!) who could resist dialling Perivale 5651 for details for your nearest dealer?

The 600 was also one of the most important cars in the history of Italian motoring. When Fiat began planning it as a replacement for the 500 Topolino in 1948, the criteria for the new car was that it should be within the financial reach





READERS' CARS MINI vs FIAT 600









The gauges, the switchgear and the warning lights will be familiar to any fan of Fiats from the 1950s and into the 1970s. Note that the doors on this 1966 example are hinged at the front, a feature only added in 1964.

of the average Italian, that it could accommodate four adults, weigh no more than 990lbs and be capable of at least 53mph. The company's engineering manager Dante Giacosa decided against a separate chassis in favour of unitary construction and a rear-mounted engine, both radical departures from the Fiat norm. To ensure maximum cabin space, the 633cc engine was longitudinally mounted

behind the transmission, and

a further innovation was the all-independent suspension with front transverse spring that served as an anti-roll bar.

The official launch of the 600 was on 9th March 1955 at the Geneva Motor Show, and Fiat also arranged for a parade of their latest model through the streets of Turin. The new model was smaller than its predecessor, but was able to convey an entire family – and it was affordable. In the late 1930s the price of a Topolino represented 20 times the average wage, but the advent of hire purchase in Italy meant that the 600's cost of 590,000 lire (the equivalent of £295) could be paid for in just 24 instalments. There was a waiting list of almost a year, and by the end of 1956 some 230,000 examples of the 600 had already found a home. Five years later, sales passed a million.

As the 1950s progressed, the front sliding windows had been replaced with drop panes, and in 1961 the 600 was upgraded as the 600D with a 767cc engine, a combined ignition-starter, a modified bonnet lid and front quarter lights. The distinctive suicide doors (with the hinges at the back rather than the front) were last fitted to the 600 in 1964 – they were believed to be prone to blowing open on the autostrada - and 1965 saw the last facelift. By then the 600 was supplemented by the slightly larger 850 and Fiat was already evaluating the merits of FWD via the Autobianchi Primula.

However, when the final D departed Turin on 18th May 1969, it was not the end of the story. As Malcolm Bobbitt notes in his fascinating book Fiat & Abarth 500 & 600, by the end of the 1960s Fiat had

as many as 25 production and local assembly plants around the world and Giacosa's masterpiece was to revolutionise motoring in the former Yugoslavia and Spain. Zastava's Kragujevac works commenced building the 600 under licence in 1955, with manufacture continuing until as recently as 1985. The Sociedad Española de Automóviles de Turismo signed an agreement with Fiat in 1950 to build cars at their Zona Franco works near Barcelona, commencing with the 1400 Berlina. SEAT launched their version of the 600 in 1957, and by the late 1960s they constituted half of the cars on Spanish roads. Production ceased in 1973, but many readers will recall seeing them perambulating around Santa Ponsa and other holiday resorts well into the 1980s.

As for the British market



www.classicsworld.co.uk

|READERS' CARS MINI vs FIAT 600





As you might expect, luggage space is not a strong point of either car. But then again, how many suitcases would you want to carry if you also had four passengers on board? Besides, both cars supplemented their modest boot space with some ingenious interior storage hideaways.

« versions, the 600 brought a touch of high Italian style to East Cheam. It was the star of Fiat's display at the 1955 Earls Court Motor Show, and when Motor Sport tested a 600 in January of the following year the price was £620 2s, well within the financial reach of any espresso bar poseur. Better still, the reporter found it 'an excellent little vehicle, capable of taking its place in the traffic stream along with cars of twice the engine capacity – and nipping past many of them.' A decade later, Motor tested a late-model D and noted that sales were then approaching the three million mark, and that at £493 7s 9d it was one of only three four-wheeled new cars available in the UK at under £500, the

other two being the base-spec Mini and the Fiat 500.

The handsome grey 600 is just one of the Cerrone collection of rear-engine Fiats, and Tommy remarks that while few people in this country recognise it compared with the 500, in Italy it is a different matter. He has owned it for about eight years, and when he came by it, the 600 had been resting in a garage for quite a time and the body was in need of attention.

He regards it as a fine town car, while the highly enthusiastic engine sounds as though it is capable of approximately 200mph. As with the Austin, it is rather nicely appointed by the standards of the day with a folding back seat to augment the limited space in the front

boot, windscreen washers, an interior lamp neatly incorporated in the driving mirror, a folding back seat and a delightfully simple heater that is essentially hot air piped from the radiator into the cabin. After all, who needs the confusing levers and switches of a modern car when the 600 makes do with a valve beneath the rear bench to control the output?

The Mini and the Fiat share the rare accolade of re-designing the form and content of masstransportation. BMC's decision to revive the Seven name was wholly understandable, but the ADO15 did not require any tribute or reference to tradition, for it created its own. As for the 600, the car that was the embodiment of the post-war

Italian Economic Miracle, it appears slightly incongruous in RHD form in the middle of Buckinghamshire. It seems to belong in a world of comedy films starring Vittorio Gassman or Alberto Sordi, darting through the streets of Rome or Milan. So, I would have the Austin for weekday transport and the Fiat for weekends, arriving at Liptons wearing a pair of La Dolce Vita sunglasses while certain customers muttered: 'I don't know what the world is coming to.' CM

WITH THANKS TO:

- **Tommy Cerrone**
- Tanya Field
- Everyone at Westcott **Venture Park – www.** westcottvp.com/



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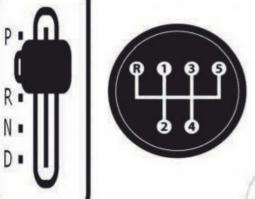


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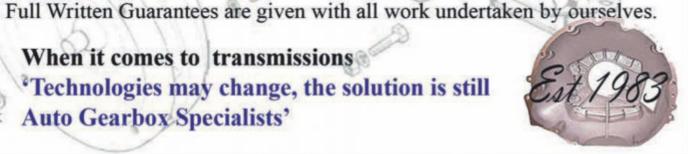
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LIVING THE DREAM

Tom Wright is not yet 40, but he has found a way to get into an E-Type on a relatively modest budget. We loved the patina of his 1970 Series 2 FHC so much that when we saw it at parked at the side of the road we had to ask how and why it came about.

STORY: TOM WRIGHT PICTURES: SIMON GOLDSWORTHY

t is true that I am towards the younger end of the E-Type ownership spectrum. Somebody on the E-Type forum did ask about people's ages and while I don't think I was quite the youngest, I wasn't far off. That means I didn't grow up with E-Types or see them on the road when I was a kid, but I've always had an interest in classic cars. At university I used to read the classic car magazines, but whereas the cars featured in something like Classic and Sports Car were always out of reach, ones in the more mainstream titles seemed to be attainable. The E-Types were featured regularly and seemed to be the pinnacle of things you could aim for, so it had always been in my mind as something aspirational while things like Ferraris and Maseratis – well, I had no idea how you got that kind of thing.

I was studying Transport Design at Coventry University, so I was surrounded by car enthusiasts. The course covered every kind of transport apart from aircraft, but attracted mainly lads who wanted to draw sports cars! You'd think that the

E-Type might have figured in that course as in some ways it defined an era of sports car design, but while it was a regular favourite, it was also one that people tended to steer clear of. We did some projects called Spiritual Successors where we imagined how a classic design might have evolved today, but the XK8 had just come out so it was difficult to draw something that hadn't already been done by Jaquar. People tended to favour obscure cars for those projects, or ones that didn't have any direct descendants. That way nobody could say you were wrong!

My first foray into classic cars was buying an old Land Rover, a 1967 Series 2A that was a runner but needed enough mechanical work to teach me a few things. I kept it for nine years as my daily driver, doing about 50 miles a day. It was great locally, but not brilliant for long distances so I also got a Jaguar XJR. That was still relatively modern, so a great car but not something I could fiddle with, and it certainly didn't start conversations the way classic cars do.



Then a friend bought an S-Type Jaguar 3.4S. I thought that was pretty cool, but by the time I started looking, the 1960s Jaguar saloons had become very expensive and I ended up getting a Rover P6 2200 instead. That was great and ideal for taking on the longer journeys, but I still lusted after things like the six-cylinder engine in my mate's Jaguar. The Rover was good, but just a little bit thrashy and the four-cylinder engine wasn't particularly charismatic.

Then one year at the Goodwood Revival I got interested in building a C-Type replica. I'd checked out the kit, negotiated for them to take the XJR in part exchange for the starter pack, and even bought a scrap Mk2 as a mechanical donor. But buying the kit meant getting a loan. So there I was with £15,000 sitting in my bank, worrying that I was going to sink so much money into a project I might never



finish, or which would require another loan for the next part of the kit, or that the DVLA might change the registration rules before I was done... I decided that before taking the plunge and handing over all my money, I should check what else was out there, just to confirm that I was doing the right thing.

At the time you could get a very nice MGB Roadster for the money I had, all finished and ready to enjoy. However, while it would have been nice for once to have a finished car that was presentable, I couldn't have done anything to add value to it. That would have been a risk with borrowed money in case at any point I needed to sell the car to clear the loan – the value of anything shiny is always very dependent on where the market decides to go. This would have been around 2013, just before classic cars seemed to double in value every year!

I'd been hoping to do the C-Type replica for £25,000, which was probably a bit ambitious. In the process of checking out what else was available, I had spotted this 4.2 Series 2 E-Type Coupé for sale, but for some reason not really focused on it. The chap had advertised it as a project and warned people not to turn up

EGU 579H

expecting a car that they could simply jump in and drive – it had an MoT, but needed work. However, I think the price he was asking (around £17,000) made it expensive compared to other projects because at the time you could get a project Series 2 FHC for £11,000 or £12,000, albeit one requiring a lot of welding.

So anyway, I'd glossed over the ad a couple of times before taking a closer look and deciding it was worth driving down to south London to see it. I was determined to be objective and not be tempted if it was a major project – I didn't have a workshop and I couldn't weld back then, and I didn't have the money to pay somebody else to do it for me. But I also told myself that if it wasn't rotten, everything else would be fixable.

As things turned out, it was much better than expected.
I kind of knew where to look for major rust, and this car seemed remarkably solid.
I agreed to buy

it, and returned the next day before the seller could change his mind. I brought as much cash as I could get out of the bank and transferred the rest, but that went missing because the bank was concerned that I was transferring such a large amount of money to somebody new, but didn't tell me. So there I was with no money left in my account and this guy telling me it had not arrived in his. That was not a high point of the day, but eventually he let me take the car, saying he trusted me!





Tom has found it easy enough to adapt to lefthand drive, and is in no hurry to move the wheel across to the right. Besides, in this guise it is ideal for those road trips to places such as Le Mans and Spa.

« the car went well in a straight line, the handling was a bit sketchy so any corners were a little unsettling. The engine itself ran well and pulled strongly. There is evidence that it has been apart in the past, but I don't know what has been done.

It didn't take long to compile a long list of things to fix on that journey home, but overall I was very happy with my purchase. There was a deadline to get the most essential jobs done because I wanted to take it to Le Mans six weeks later, so the first thing was that oil leak. This involved taking the sump off which was tricky in situ, but it was possible and we made it to Le Mans and back.

The engine does breathe a bit so could probably do with a freshen up at some point, but most of my efforts in the engine bay so far have been concentrated on getting the carburettors and ignition set up correctly – a car in standard trim is easy in this regard because the factory has done the development for you and all you have to do is put it back to their settings, but when a car has been modified you are starting pretty much from scratch. This one came with Weber carbs, a tubular exhaust manifold, electronic ignition... For a long time it had a low-down stutter that you had to drive around. It took a lot of research to figure out that the ignition advance curves and the carburettor

float levels were both wrong, but correcting these made a big improvement. I did then get it on a rolling road, where it was found to be running a bit rich and they managed to get an extra 12bhp (taking it from 204bhp to 216bhp) just by changing the main jets.

It had taken me six years to get it onto the rolling road, though. I knew a visit would pay dividends, but I also knew it was going to be expensive and I didn't want to pay somebody to do what I could do myself, partly for my own satisfaction and partly because I am running the car on a small budget compared to most E-Type owners today. As a result, I only wanted to call

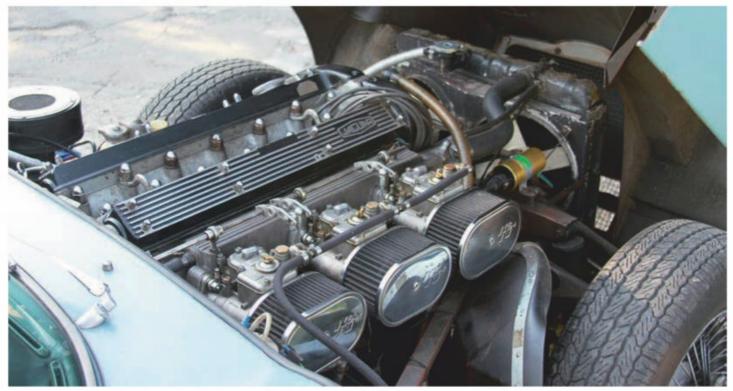
in the experts when I felt I had got it as far as I could myself. And the rolling road guys were very complimentary – they said that cars normally came to them running like a bag of nails, but they only needed a couple of hours to fine tune my Jaguar.

There have been some big jobs along the way, too. Last summer I had to rebuild the rear axle. I'd









The car came to Tom fitted with triple Webers, which he has finally got sorted and tuned to perfection.









taken it to Spa for the Classic in the spring, and it was feeling a little tired and rattly from the back end. Plus I wanted to raise the gearing because, being an ex-US car, it has a really low diff and no overdrive. Five-speed conversions are very expensive and overdrive doesn't fit on the SWB cars, so I opted for the taller diff ratio from an XJS. That unit was only a couple of hundred pounds, and if you get the right age diff it is a straight swap and looks identical. Fortunately it may have been a budget option, but it has worked out fine.

I rebuilt everything on the back axle while it was out, just in time as well because some of the joints had collapsed. It had a 3.54:1 ratio originally and is now 2.88:1, which is a big step and very noticeable from behind the wheel. It hasn't blunted acceleration enough to really notice, but I tend to find that whereas previously I was accelerating in fourth gear and then fishing for a fifth that wasn't there, I am now in third

and still have fourth to go. Certainly it never feels like I am running out of gears on the road.

For the suspension, I went through the car. The rear springs are original, but all the dampers have been replaced with standard spec units. Front torsion bars are originals too, but I replaced all the suspension bushes, ball joints etc. When I got the car it had power steering fitted, and that numbed the feel. I managed to get some feel back in by adding extra castor, but then earlier this year a friend who had converted a number of imported cars to RHD gave me a LHD rack without power assistance and that has made a big difference. I still need to take the engine apart at some point as it still breathes a bit and leaks a little oil. I am not sure what spec I will go for, but until something major goes wrong it is not an urgent job.

Being an E-Type with plenty of patina, it really does attract attention. Most people ask: 'Are you going to keep it like this or are you going to paint it?' It is going to stay as it is for as long as possible because painting it properly would cost maybe £10,000 – one of the problems with owning a car that has gone up in value so much is that expectations as to the quality of work that goes into it have also gone up just as much.

Because this car doesn't live indoors all the time and gets used in the wet, it will need some structural work eventually. When that gets done, it will then need a decent coat of paint to protect it, but I'm happy to postpone things for as long as possible because I don't want it in pristine condition. I don't really enjoy polishing cars, and have never been able to keep any of mine looking immaculate. Nobody ever started an interesting story with: 'There was this one time when I was cleaning the car...' All the interesting stories are based on road trips. I'm not even bothered by the fact that it is LHD. It may get converted as and when it



The FHC is a surprisingly practical tourer. We also happen to think the coupé lines suit the E-Type best, though not everyone agrees.

« gets properly restored, but I have got used to this and there are more important things to do other than change something that is already functional.

I realise that price inflation over the past five years has changed the sums, but this car has shown that you can buy and run a glamorous classic on a real-world budget if you are prepared to do a lot of the work yourself. An E-Type is not nearly as complex as some people think, the parts you need are all freely available and there is a lot of information out there to help. And everything was well built originally, so they are nice cars to work on.

I think the only thing that puts them beyond the reach of many people is that the purchase price has gone up so much.

However, I would recommend that if somebody wanted to do it on a budget, they shouldn't be too precious about what the E-Type market considers desirable. Buy a LHD car, for example. A Series 2 is as nice to drive as a Series 1, if not better in some respects. A 2+2 is more affordable, and again they might not look quite the same, but they still look like an E-Type and they are still as much fun to drive. You can make US-spec cars as quick as UK ones with a few tweaks,



and Webers are a cheaper option than SUs if you are not a stickler for originality. Similarly if you can put up with some patina and the odd bit of damaged leather, costs tumble. If you want an

original car in the most desirable spec and in pristine condition then it is going to be expensive, but that is the choice you have to make. I've had a lot more fun doing this one on a budget.

OUR IMPRESSIONS

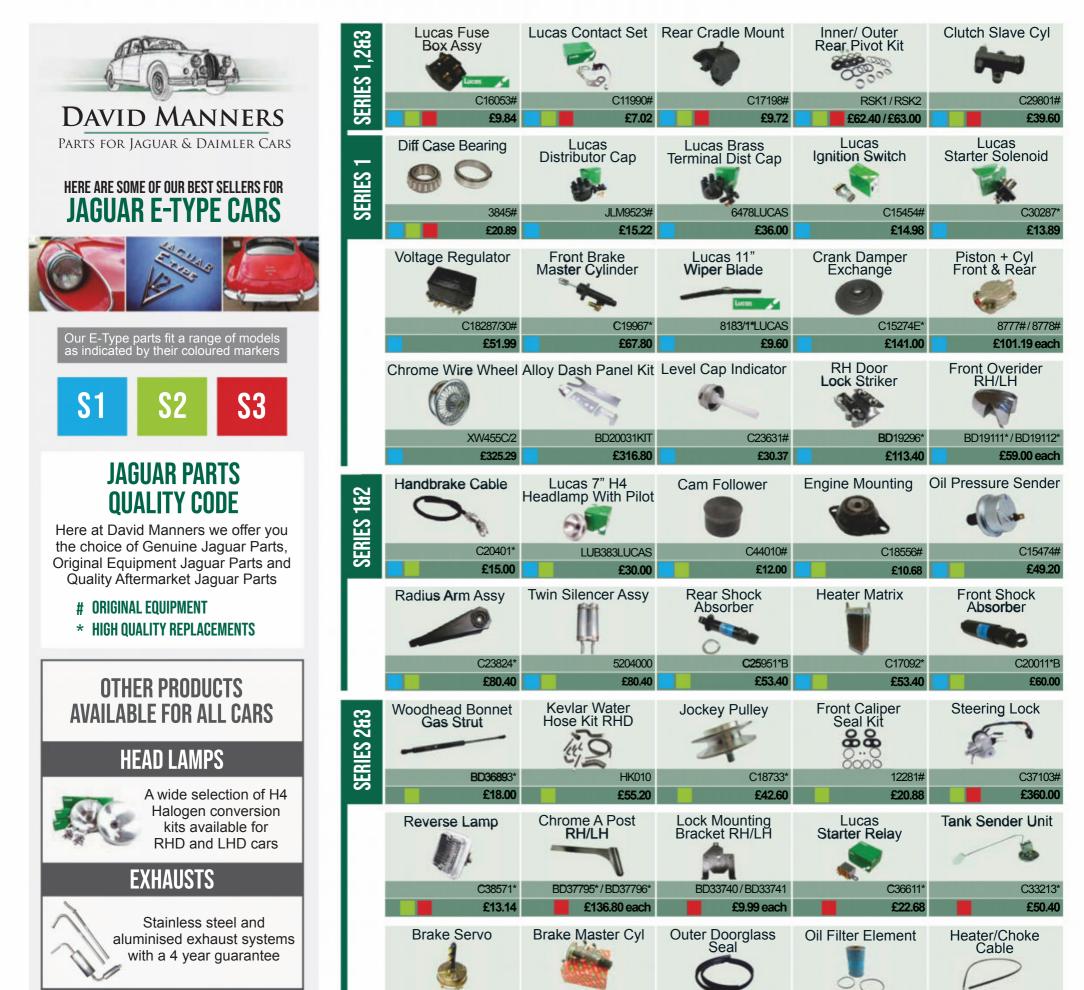
Getting into an E-Type is always an experience as you climb across the extremely wide sill and fall down into the seat. Once you are there, it is really quite spacious for a sports car. There is plenty of leg room, though your legs are stretched out fairly straight because you sit so low. There is plenty of width in the footwell too, and the seats are comfortable – it may be a 1960s sports car, but it is in another league from the likes of Triumph and MG, especially their smaller entry-level models.

Looking ahead, pretty much all you see is the huge great bonnet bulge that stretches out in front of you. There is a certain drama to that, but you don't really notice the dramatic effect of the whole body that other people are seeing. The pulling power of the 4.2 straight-six is very impressive. It is not manic like the kick you get in the back from a four-cylinder turbo, but it does personify the expression 'pulls like a train.' The overall effect is like having a large hand that pushes against the small of your back to propel you forwards, and as the speed increases it just keeps on pushing. The sound of the straight-six is wonderful too, a rasp that is hugely underrated by those who wax lyrical about the burble of a V8. A

straight-six is very different, but every bit as intoxicating.

The big surprise though is just how comfortable the whole experience is. Tom is absolutely right to have replaced all the suspension as standard first and only then to see if it needed uprating, because people often jump in and fit all manner of uprated goodies that are generally unnecessary. We have been driving today not at crazy speeds because we are on a public road, but not hanging about either, and there was so little body roll through the bends, no screeching or sliding on roundabouts, it just went around the tightest of corners with little fuss. On a track it would no doubt be different, but on the road this one feels like a perfect compromise between comfort and handling.

Also very impressive is how Tom has concentrated on sorting out the mechanical side without getting side-tracked with a shiny new paint job. This car runs so well and just gives the feeling that wherever you want to go, it will get you there. And as for doing it in style, you don't need a shiny paint job for that. Indeed, many owners of pristine examples are drawn to this one simply because it is so natural. Certainly we wouldn't change a thing about it.



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The Renault 4 may have taken Citroën's 2CV as its inspiration, but the newcomer was arguably the better car. Unfortunately though, it never quite reached the same iconic status, especially in the UK, and today is a very rare sight indeed.

WORDS AND PICTURES: SIMON GOLDSWORTHY

hen Pierre Dreyfus took over as Chairman of Renault in 1955, he inherited the rearengined Dauphine that was ready for introduction in 1956, but oversaw the company's move from there to the Renault 4, introduced in 1961. Admittedly there were other rear-engined Renaults to come (such as the R8 of 1962 and the R10 of 1969), but it was the R4 which showed the way to a FWD and hatchback future.

According to J. Dewar McLintock in his book, Renault: The Cars and the Charisma,

Dreyfus had told the designers of the new Renault 4: 'What I want you to come up with is a holdall on wheels - a travelling bag that can go anywhere without feeling self-conscious. It must be tough as a rhino and cost a lot less to run. People will go to church in it, will go camping, will commute to the office, will make it a livestock carrier, a shop, a wedding car, a passion wagon...'

The car they came up with did all that and more. Heavily influenced by Citroën's 2CV but by no means a copy, it had a sturdy chassis frame with



a steel deck, and a boxy five door body bolted on top. It was launched initially as the R3 with a 603cc engine (which was never a big seller) and the far more popular R4 with 747ccs, the latter in either 27.6bhp or 30bhp tune. There was also a 4L which – confusingly for those who remember the fourlight and six-light nomenclature

for pre-war cars – had six side windows instead of the base car's four windows and thick C-pillars, while a Fourgon 6cwt van was added to the mix from late in 1961. For the cars, the 4L quickly became the definitive version and from October 1962 the lesser models were discontinued.

The engines were the





Billancourt four-cylinder water-cooled units with wet-liners that were carried over from the 4CV, while an 845cc version from the Renault Dauphine was added to the mix from 1963. In 1978 the GTL got a different and bigger 1108cc Sierra engine, an engine family that Renault had been using in a variety of capacities since 1962. A 956cc version of this finally ousted the old Billancourt 845cc unit from 1986.

The transmission was all new, an unpopular three-speed unit initially with synchromesh only on the top two ratios, but allsynchromesh from 1962 and



The interior is basic, but not Spartan with a checked fabric that is bright and cheerful plus excellent visibility all round. Renault clearly decided that a comprehensive set of warning lights negated the need for dials.

finally with four speeds from 1967. Steering was by rack and pinion, while the long-travel suspension was courtesy of maintenance-free torsion bars – in fact the R4 boasted the luxury at the time of not having any grease nipples in the suspension or steering. Interestingly the rear torsion bars were mounted across the car so the wheelbase on one side is longer than the other.

While targeted at a similar market to Citroën's 2CV, the Renault was designed in a different era for different needs – it was faster and more powerful, and roomier thanks to a full-width body rather than the 2CV's pre-war styling. It was still pretty crude by more modern standards, but then again it was always designed to be functional rather than fashionable.

The adoption of a separate chassis was in some ways a retrograde step for Renault at the time, but it allowed them to give the R4 very slim pillars and great all-round visibility. Sliding windows were cheap to produce and effective enough. Power was adequate, but adequate in terms of 'just about enough for the job' rather than 'there's plenty there, but we'd rather not say exactly how much' in the style of Rolls-Royce! The umbrella-style gear lever looks odd, but is easy enough once you develop the correct push-pull action and remember that fourth gear is somewhat out on a limb.

The R4 lasted in production for 31 years, finally bowing out in 1992 after some 8 million had been bought (though production continued in Slovenia until 1994). Despite those high numbers, the survival rate in this country has been poor and today they are a very rare sight indeed. Which is why, when I saw the 1986 GTL in our pictures at a classic car show, I was keen to sign it up for a photoshoot.

The car belongs to Jez Bellairs, who is a serial Renault owner and big fan of the marque's smaller offerings. 'I've always liked Renault 4s,' he said. 'I like the look of them,







and the fact that they are different. I did have a Renault F6 van previously, and I have had a Renault 5 in the past, but an early one that had the same hockey stick gear lever. The older cars like the Dauphine don't really do it for me in the same way, but of the later cars I quite like the first Clios.

'I bought the R4 in 2000, from a girl in Nottingham. I was working up there and saw it in the car park. I would see it there every day, and kept asking the owner if she wanted to sell it. Eventually she gave in and said yes. She had been using it as an everyday car, and I did the same for a couple of years, before I let it run short



The Sierra engine is also known as the Cléon-Fonte family. Note that the wheelbrace on the inner wing also acts as a starting handle, even though Renault dropped the access hole and the dog for this in the late 1960s.

of water and seized the engine. It doesn't have a temperature gauge, so there is little advance warning – when the red light comes on, it is already too hot.'

It would take many years before the little Renault returned to the road. By the time Jez finally got stuck into the project in 2013, the engine was totally seized because it had been standing for so long. Still, this is where the wet-liner

construction comes into its own because they are easy to replace if you can get them. Jez found his pistons and liners advertised for sale in Greece

'My partner Nicola and I managed to get the engine out using a piece of wood and some rope - 1-2-3 lift!' said Jez, 'but putting it back in required more precision so we used a crane for that. I put new bearings in, but didn't have a regrind. I did, though, have the head converted to run on unleaded petrol.'

Nicola also helped to strip down the body before the basic shell was lifted from the chassis. 'It is not too heavy, but melting the mastic so that we could release the two was the biggest headache,' says Jez. Progress was still moving along only slowly, but then some professional help was enlisted from Renault Reborn, a company up in Louth, Lincolnshire who specialise in the R4. Jez made several trips up there, taking first the chassis, then the body.



'It wasn't too rusty in the end,' recalls Jez, but we did need a few panels. I got one inner wing from Croatia via eBay, and you can get pattern wings from France. I wasn't aiming for a show car, just one for everyday use and the occasional event. I certainly didn't want to create a car that I would be too precious about.' We'd say the standard ended up being very close to something you would get precious about!

'I have not had to do much to the interior,' adds Jez, 'so it has lasted really well considering the car has clocked up over 103,000 miles. All I've had to get done is replacing the foam in the seats because they were getting a little saggy, but the upholstery is original.

'It was finally back on the road in June 2018. I didn't have any teething troubles, but even though it had taken me five years to get there, after all that time I got straight back into it and felt at home. And I'd been driving things like Golf GTIs in the meantime, which are very different. The R4 GTL might have the biggest engine that Renault offered in the model at 1108cc, but it is not exactly what you would call powerful. However, that is not what this car is all about. It is small, but it



is really practical, even perhaps a bit agricultural. The seats fold down, but you can also take them out easily. The gear stick looks very odd for people who are fresh to the model, but I am so used to it that the action is second nature. It is a regular H-pattern anyway, the pushpull action just takes a little getting used to.

'The car is narrow and tall, so like a Citroën 2CV it does lean quite dramatically when you go around corners, but you can't roll them. When Nicola

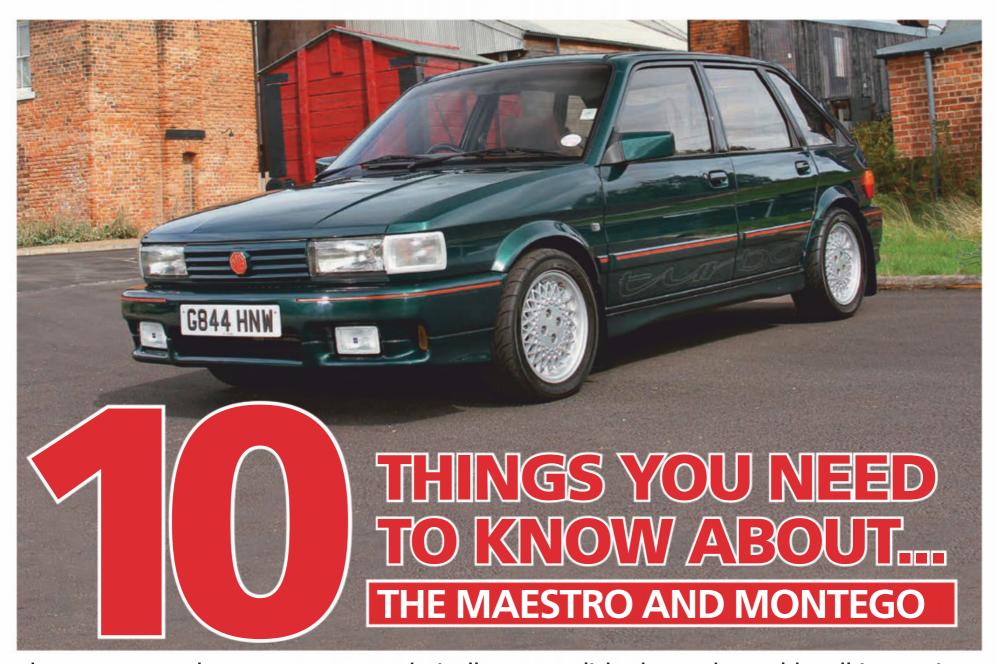
comes out in it, she usually ends up hanging on for dear life through the corners. I did plan to take this to France on holiday, but while it is fine for pottering about locally, on a run it is happiest pootling along at 55-60mph. It is surprisingly quite at those speeds, despite having virtually no insulation.'

As you might expect, Jez's R4 gets a lot of reaction at shows, many people remembering them as family cars in the past, or from seeing and renting them while on holiday abroad.

Inevitably, some of those people want to know what the car is worth today. That is not the easiest question to answer, because there are so few about. As Jez says, LHD ones are going for around £4000-£4500, so he hazards a guess that this one is worth £6000-£7000, but quickly adds that it is immaterial anyway as he has no plans to sell. However, he also mentions that he has just bought a very low-mileage Renault 5, so who knows what we will see him in at next year's show!



TOP TEN TRIVIA: THE MAESTRO & MONTEGO



The Maestro and Montego were technically accomplished cars that sold well in Austin, MG, Vanden Plas and Rover guises, but without ever really setting the world on fire. So what exactly were they hiding under those distinctive skins?

he 1970s and '80s were traumatic years for British Leyland/BL/Austin Rover/Rover, not least because it was bailed out by the UK government in 1975 and the subsequent very tight lock on cash flow had a significant effect on model development. In part, that explains the protracted development of the Maestro and Montego. These started as internal project code ADO99 (Austin Drawing Office project 99), which was set in 1975 and was for a new mid-range hatchback to replace both the Allegro and the Maxi.

By 1977, following significant company restructuring, the internal code had changed to LC10 (Leyland Cars project 10), and that took the project into what became the hatchback Maestro and the Montego three-box saloon. They were to remain like Siamese twins until 1980, when they were split into two with the project codes changed to LM10 (Light Medium) for the Maestro and LM11 for the Montego, the latter now with a longer wheelbase and other changes to move it upmarket.

The situation surrounding engines was complex, but one engine that was always going to be fitted was the A-series in 1275cc form. Whilst this was far from cutting edge,



it was still a more than competitive engine in terms of efficiency, power and refinement - certainly it was acceptable enough for the market sector in which the Maestro would be, though less so for the Montego.

With entry level models covered by the 1275cc A-series engine, there was also a need for a larger capacity unit. The production car segments at the time favoured a 1600 next and then ideally a 2000cc car, but there was nothing in the company cupboard of a suitable 1600cc capacity – for unclear reasons, BL had previously chosen engine capacities that were out of step with the mainstream, for example the 1485cc and 1748cc E-series or the 1695cc O-series, the latter developed from the older B-series engine. The 1695cc O-series had been tried with an end-on gearbox, but was ruled out because it was too long. However, the shorter Maxi/Allegro E-series was given a new crank with a stroke

TOP TEN TRIVIA: THE MAESTRO & MONTEGO



The Maestro 1.3 was the entry-level model, but the HLE spec got you luxuries such as a radio, tweed seat facings and a rear wiper.

between that of the 1485cc and 1748cc engines to deliver 1598cc, and the 'new' engine was called the R-series.

A bonus of the R-series was that the common cylinder head valve and port sizes on the E-series engines were too big for the 1485cc and too small for the 1748cc engine for best efficiency, but were ideal for the 1598cc capacity and it delivered a competent 81bhp with a good torque spread and efficiency. However, it had to be turned 180 degrees in the engine bay, and the taller engine with carburettor and manifold up front dictated that the Maestro had a higher bonnet line than would have been chosen on purely aesthetic grounds.

The R-series was then developed into the S-series, which was quieter and smoother from using a timing belt rather than chain, and the engineers took the opportunity to turn the head 180° on the block to move the manifolds to the back of the engine and reduce the front height of the engine. It had the same electronically-controlled SU carb as the R-series, but gained full digital ignition control which helped add a useful extra 6% power – only spark distribution was done mechanically by a rotor arm and distributor cap fitted to the end of the cam. The S-series was fitted to the Montego from the start



When the turbo Maestro arrived, it had 150bhp, a top speed of 132mph and did 0-60mph in 6.7 seconds. As the ad said: 'Faster than a Ferrari, a Porsche, a Lamborghini, a Lotus, an Aston...'.

in April 1984, then to the Maestro when it replaced the troublesome R-series in that application from July 1984.

The launch of the Montego introduced the revamped 2.0-litre O-series with either a single SU carb (104bhp) or Lucas EFi (115bhp) and superb class-leading torque. It also went through the 180° head-on-block move to keep the induction and exhaust system at the back of the engine bay compared to the earlier FWD O-series cars. There was also a diesel version of this, developed with Perkins and known as either the Perkins Prima or Rover MDi (later to become the L-series), which helped sustain sales of the aging models into the 1990s.

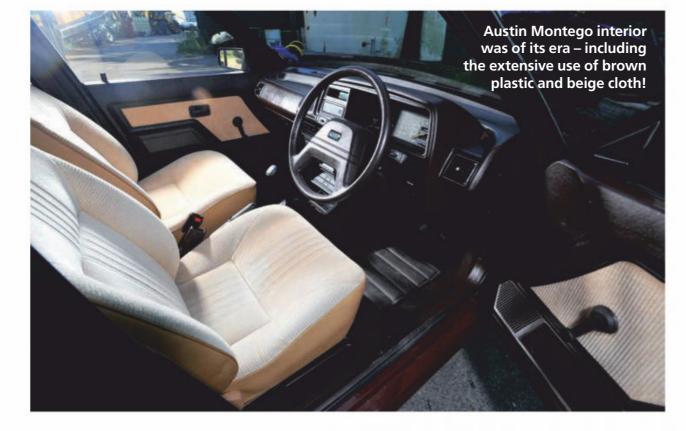
Production in the UK finished in 1994. It lasted far longer than was expected given its early life issues, but this reflected the basic fact that once public perceptions and headline press comment was stripped away, there were two really quite competent and later mature cars that owners actually liked.

◀ The gestation period of the Maestro can be said to have been eight years by the time of its launch on 1st March 1983. The main consequence of such a long development period was that aspects such as styling were pretty much set in stone a long time before the cars were launched. Unfortunately, as a result they were then seen by many as dated from the very beginning, even though they had plenty of class-leading attributes.

The FWD layout of the new cars demanded a new end-on gearbox with five speeds, because BL's traditional gearboxin-sump of the existing FWD models was simply too crude. The company was developing a new LT80 end-on gearbox, but in the meantime they grafted on VW's Golf gearbox so that engine testing could proceed. This worked so well that they cancelled their own gearbox project and made a deal with VW to use theirs. That gave them a gearbox which was ready for production immediately, but the higher cost of buying them in would make the cars less profitable in the long run.

The use of the end-on gearbox demanded that the A-series engine be turned 180 degrees from its usual FWD configuration, putting the fuel and exhaust system to the front of the car behind the radiator. A bonus of this was that the distributor was now in the dry between the engine and the bulkhead, so the new models never suffered from the Mini/Metro/ Allegro issues of rain water on the distributor causing the engine to cut out.

The MG Maestro 1600 version had twin 40DCNF Weber carburettors on the R-series, which were even more of a squeeze under the bonnet than the SU and had to use a very short inlet manifold. This



TOP TEN TRIVIA: THE MAESTRO & MONTEGO

compact fit saw easy heat transfer into the carburettors and fuel system, leading to overheated fuel causing poor hot restarts or poor running when in slow stop-start traffic. This could and should have been developed out before the model went on sale, but the unexpected sales success of the MG Metro had persuaded BL to bring forward the MG Maestro 1600 and launch it alongside the Austin versions on 1st March 1983.

Despite its shortcomings in the MG version, development of the E-series engine into the R-series was actually a clever political move, as the word circulating at that time was that the government's funding rules would allow further development of an existing engine, but that a clean sheet design would have needed to be separately authorised and Mrs Thatcher would have been a considerable hurdle to get on side! So by developing the E-series engine and creating the stepping stone stop-gap R-series, this opened a funding door for it to be further developed into the substantially new S-series engine.

6 When the O-series was introduced, it came with the highly regarded Honda PG1 gearbox, which became the mainstream Rover gearbox and was used all the way up to the end of MG TF production in 2011 (by then under Chinese control). The VW gearbox continued on 1.3 and 1.6 models until 1988 when the Montego 1.6 moved to PG1, but not Maestro 1.3 and 1.6 because that model was expected to be dead within a year with the new second generation Rover 200 replacing it. The fact that the Maestro soldiered on until 1994 was unexpected, less so for the Montego as it still had a place alongside the new Rover 200.

7 1985 saw the introduction of the sparkling Montego Turbo that unfortunately gained as many headlines for its torque steer under hard acceleration as it did for its blistering pace and 126mph top speed, although the waywardness was calmed within a couple of years via minor



The Austin Montego (right) had at various times 1.3 A-series, 1.6 S-series, 2.0 O-series and 2.0 L-series engines. The MG version (above) only got the O-series unit, both normally aspirated and turbocharged.

suspension changes. Interestingly there were plans for a Maestro Turbo using a non-intercooled version of the Montego's turbo engine, but this was canned by Harold Musgrove, Austin Rover's MD. Immediately after his departure a couple of years later, the Maestro Turbo was back on track and guietly appeared to a surprised world at the 1988 Motor Show in full intercooled form with a Tickford derived and fitted body kit.

Back in 1984 when visiting Lucas, I was surprised to see several development Maestro 1.6 HL and HLS models on A-plate (1983) registrations using Montego panels on the front – my immediate reaction was to call them Monstros due to the unbalanced look. While the look might not have been to my tastes, the engineering under those front panels was more interesting as it concealed full two-litre Project XX (Rover 820) running gear. I was given a demo run in one using the development 16-valve engine with multipoint EFi and this impressed me so much that it led to me creating my own M16 engined MG Maestro EFi a few years later.





9 Following the name change to Rover Group in 1986, there was a very strong undercurrent of what was known as 'Roverisation.' The oblong Austin Maestro and Montego front grille badges, which originally had the Austin Morris blue and green diagonal striped logo with AUSTIN above, changed to just the letters MAESTRO or MONTEGO before the 1989 facelifts. The Maestro badge never evolved beyond this as the model was expected to be gone soon, but Montego changed to a new Rover Viking shaped badge mounted on the front of the bonnet with just MONTEGO letters, with or without a vertical red line embellishment.

◆ The end of UK production in 1994 • Was not quite the end for either car as the Maestro was sold off and briefly ended up being assembled in Bulgaria, with a further batch of cars being assembled in Ledbury, Herefordshire from CKD kits. The Montego meanwhile followed a similar rather unsuccessful CKD route with kits being assembled in India. Ironically, in the 2000s a Chinese company briefly made Maestros – and a Maestro van – with Montego front panels. I'm afraid I have to say that the passage of time hadn't softened my viewpoint regarding their look!

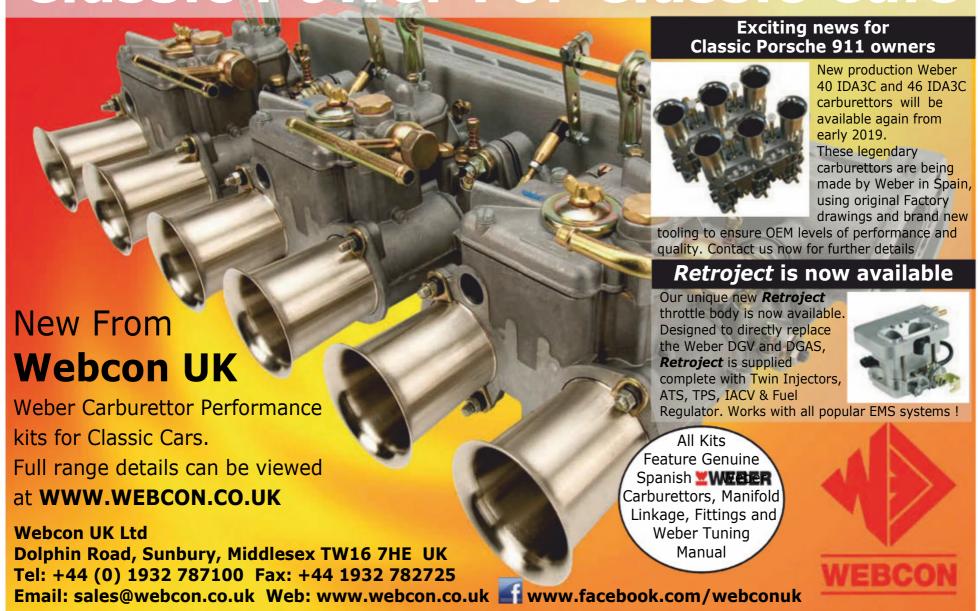


Always distinctive thanks to their side scallops, this 1989 Austin Maestro in profile clearly shows the well-balanced and extremely practical design, with thin pillars and lots of glass.





Classic Power For Classic Cars



A MINOR PROJECT?

When the editor went in search of a Morris Minor project car, he didn't want a basket case and he couldn't afford perfection. That left him shopping in the dangerous no-man's land between those two extremes. So did he find a car that could be used as a rolling restoration without turning into a bottomless money pit? Only time will tell!



hen I was a teenager, I always wanted a Morris Minor. It is probably just as well I couldn't afford one at the time because the dream was to fit bigger rear wheels and cover the dash in fake fur. In my defence I was 13 at the time and this was the 1970s. I'm now considerably older and like to think I have developed slightly more in the way of good taste. However, I never thought it would take me this long to scratch the Minor itch, and I really do not know what has caused the delay. In the subsequent 40 years of classic car tinkering I have owned a couple of Minor 1000 saloons, but only for brief periods as they were part of a series I was writing on trading cars, so inevitably they had to be fettled and moved quickly on.

The urge never went away though, and each time I had the pleasure of photographing or riding in one owned by a reader, it would grow slightly more insistent. I even narrowed my choice down to the exact specification I wanted – a car built between October 1962 and late 1964. That

would net me the improved running gear introduced along with the more powerful 1098cc version of the engine – stronger gearbox, front brakes increased in diameter from 7in to 8in, a taller back axle up from 4.55:1 to 4.22:1 – but still have the older style banjo steering wheel and gold faced speedometer. I quite fancied a Traveller too, not just because their quirky timber frames always attract attention at shows, but also because the estate car load bay makes them especially practical as working vehicles. However, a few things worked against the estate. For one thing the Traveller is always considerably more expensive than a comparable saloon, and anything with recently replaced wood naturally carries an additional premium. But also, having owned BGTs and a Trabant estate in the past, the idea of a boot in which to store valuables away from prying eyes had some appeal.

I did go and inspect one car billed as a 1963 saloon, but it turned out to be a 1961 car that had been re-registered. Despite it lacking all the mechanical upgrades that

GEORGE KEXXIXG (CHESTERFIELD) LT

Original bill of sale for a total of £627 10s 3d was included in the history file with the car.

came along with the switch from 948cc to 1098cc engine, I was still tempted because it was remarkably sound and unmolested underneath. However, it had been standing for some time, was with a dealer who knew little about its past, and when I added up



the cost of a total respray and interior trim before even starting on any mechanical recommissioning that would be required, the sums just didn't add up.

I also considered another car that seemed ideal on paper, but which became rapidly less appealing at the price being asked once I'd studied the pictures that the owner was kind enough to send. And then this Almond Green two-door saloon with just 60,345 miles on the clock popped up for sale. As a 1967 car it ticked some of the boxes on my wish list, but not everything. It had the later running gear for example, but also the black faced speedo and later Mini-style two spoke steering wheel. Neither of those were deal breakers though, whereas there was considerable appeal in a car that was tidy and on the road, but which still offered scope for improvement.

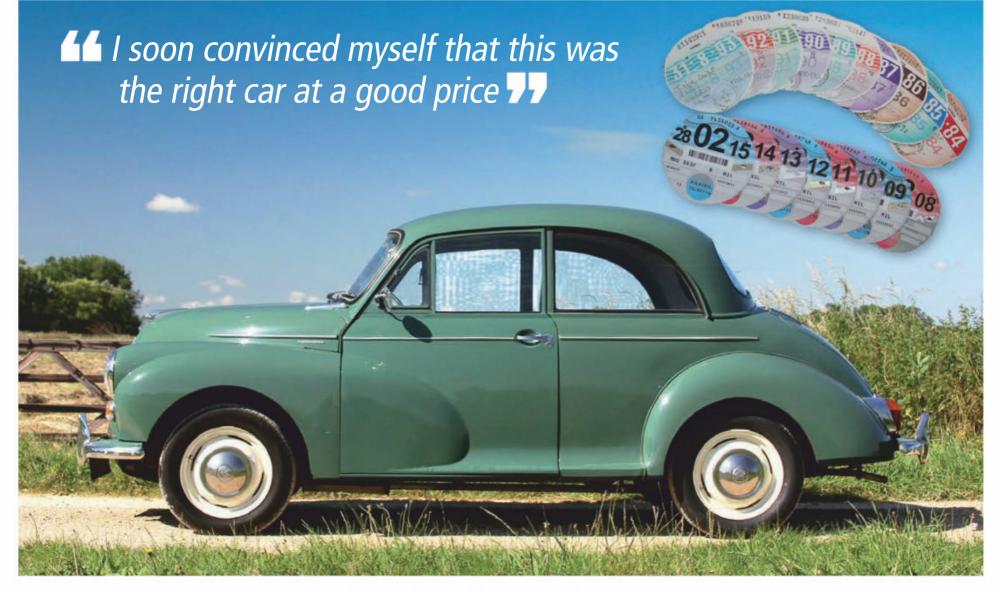
The ad said: 'Emily, 1967. Almond Green. Original receipt, along with history. Three previous owners. Mileage believed to be correct. Unleaded head replacement/new alternator 2018. Electronic ignition. Valued at £5000 in 2017 by Morris Minor Owners Club (valuation form present). Drives



Morris never could decide how many glovebox lids to fit in their Minor. By 1967 they had settled on one for the passenger side only, probably the most logical of the many configurations.

superbly and lovely condition.' Despite that club valuation, the asking price was £3500. For a couple of days I kept returning to check out the pictures and the description again. I soon convinced myself that this was the right car at a good price, but there was a catch – it was located in Tamworth, and I was tied to my desk in Lincolnshire with magazine deadlines looming.

Fearing that it would not hang around long, I hatched a plan. A friend of mine, Roger Parker, lives just ten minutes away from the seller. Although not a Morris man himself, Roger is a hands-on expert on MGs and he agreed to drop by and check it out for me. His report popped up on my computer the very next day, and said: 'Whilst I didn't take the car for a run.



OUR CARS MORRIS MINOR

« having looked over it and heard the engine running from a cold start, it was very sweet and responsive and left me with no doubt that when the seller says he would take the car to Cornwall at the drop of a hat, I can quite believe him. He was right about the passenger door suffering corrosion in the usual place, right at the bottom where the characteristic curve is seen. Being a door though means that it is not structural and just a bolt on panel.

'Speaking of structure, I have to say that tapping all around the underside sounded quite solid and whilst you will see some minor surface rust in some places, this is nothing more than an indication that the already quite comprehensive underbody coating needs a refresh. The parts mentioned as being changed were all clearly new and this car just exudes genuine honesty, like its owner. Looking at the underside, the panels are rust treatment protected, but not thickly 'gobbed' on so the panels underneath are clearly defined and specific areas such as the underside of the sills and the torsion bar rear structural mount all looked and sounded very solid, with it passing my

tapping test as well. 'Mechanically the engine looked good with clean oil. I couldn't see much of the gearbox, but as the rear axle was dry and that didn't appear to be a just-cleaned look, then both the gearbox and axle should

The Porcelain Green interior is in pretty good shape overall. The steering wheel could do with a refurb while the speedo is rather unsure of itself and waves all over the place, but really these are relatively minor issues.

be oil tight. The carb, fuel pump and alternator are, as you can see, clearly new and the fuel tank is obviously recent too. The exhaust was sound as well, but with your focus on a bodily sound car I didn't really pursue the mechanical side any further.

'So to summarise I feel that this car meets your measure of being structurally sound

with only a few bits of cosmetic corrosion that would be guite easy to deal with, with perhaps the exception of the passenger door that I expect will show much more corrosion once stripped back. However, when tapping the underside of both doors they sounded quite solid, so I reckon repair to that door will be viable. I would advise that this car is one to pursue. I specifically asked him what interest he'd had, and was





Engine bay has seen money spent on some big ticket items by previous owners, things such as an unleaded conversion, new fuel pump, carburettor and electronic distributor.

told he had one caller just after you spoke to him, and someone is viewing the car on Monday. I really think this car will be one that will sell quickly.'

What else could I do, but take a chance? I called the seller and we agreed a price of £3350. I transferred over a decent deposit, arranged insurance and bought a train ticket. Three days later I was heading back to base in my very own Minor at last. And it did not disappoint – driving a new classic for the first time can be a slightly nervewracking affair, not least when it entails a 70-mile run on a wide variety of roads, but the Minor is such an affable and charming chap that it is impossible not to love it.

Of course, £3350 is not going to buy a perfect car and Roger had already pointed out some of the faults waiting to be fixed. I was able to add a few more items to that list by the time I got home, but nothing major. For example, it is a long time since I have driven a car whose speedo needle bounces around quite as much as this one, which made the sat-nav invaluable for keeping to the speed limits in town. (There was no such worry of inadvertently breaking the national speed limit, with 55-60mph feeling like the car's happiest gait!)



Another niggle was that it had been fitted with inertia reel seat belts. These should have been a bonus, but because the upper mounting point on a Minor is still below shoulder height, the end result is that the belt soon starts to tug on your shoulder and make it ache. I think a set of period static belts will be on the list of jobs to do. Other points for investigation included an indicator stalk that was wrapped in insulating tape, a

non-functioning aftermarket power socket and an oil pressure light that failed to illuminate when you turned the key.

Mechanically, the engine felt strong and willing and the steering was both light and precise, but the clutch lacked feel and went from in to out so quickly that it took a lot of concentration to effect a smooth getaway. In contrast to the clutch, the gearbox was an absolute delight. It felt slick and tight,

OUR CARS PROJECT MORRIS MINOR

with not even the hint of a crunch when dropping down into second. I had been wondering about a five-speed conversion, but now I can't help thinking that it would be a crime to ditch such a sweet-shifting original box. I will have to revisit those thoughts once I have racked up a few more miles in its current more leisurely specification, though. The same applies to the brakes, where I had expected to want a front disc conversion, but now wonder if the drums all round will be fine so long as the rest of the specification remains as standard.

Those are all 'might-be-nice' additions though, and I can only contemplate them once I have satisfied myself that the basics are all sound. One of the problems with buying a classic these days is the fact that anything over 40 years old can be exempted from requiring an MoT inspection. That might be OK for a year or two, but as the years roll by, so the faults can mount up either unseen or ignored.

TNU 363F had been declared as MoT exempt, but a check on the government website at **www.check-mot.service. gov.uk** showed that its last MoT had only expired ten months previously. However, looking back through its MoT history showed a fairly epic fail in May 2016. The required remedial work was obviously carried out, as it passed a month later with just a couple of advisories, then again the following year with none.

The old tax discs that came in the history file also told a tale of the past, with a full set from 1984-1993, then a break until running again from 2008-2015 when

the government stopped issuing them. Unfortunately the bills in the same folder only started from 2008, so I don't know what happened between 1993 and 2008.

I shall be getting an MoT on the Minor before putting it into regular use, but first of all I will take it to a Morris Minor expert and get his verdict on the car, and what needs to be done as a priority before I start considering any luxuries. His report will be the subject of next issue's instalment.



BILLS IN THE PAPERWORK FILE

PIEES III		
17 MAY 2018:	Front and rear brake shoe set	£40.08
28 APRIL 2018:	Locking fuel cap	£27
8 MARCH 2018:	Alternator conversion, door pull straps, seat base foams	.£180.90
23 FEBRUARY 2018:	Cylinder head gasket, thermostat and housing, heater valve (manual), Accuspark 25D electronic distributor	.£156.48
9 MAY 2014:	Lockheed front wheel cylinders, flexihoses, Mintex brake shoes	.£112.08
15 APRIL 2014:	Spring hanger plates, rear bump stops, rear shackle plates, exhaust fitting kit	.£112.38
13 MAY 2013:	Copper fuel line, petrol tank sender unit	£52.14
5 NOVEMBER 2012:	Genuine SU pump, complete HS2 carburettor (new)	.£296.21
10 JUNE 2011:	New fuel tank, Lumenition ignition kit, suspension bushes, grommets, gaskets and sundries	.£250.52
7 MAY 2008:	Premium green carpet set	£61.95
4 JANUARY 2008:	Full engine service kit and inertia reel seatbelts.	£69.40





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DRIVER'S Diary



Iain Aure Contributor

An expat motoring author and journo resident in Vancouver, Iain was unable to resist the opportunities that comprise his fleet of projects, but is also unable to muster the focus, energy or organisational skills to complete them.

MY FLEET

1947 BENTLEY MKVI

OWNED SINCE: 2015 ENGINE: 4.25-litre straight six

1957 BENTLEY S1

OWNED SINCE: 2019 **ENGINE:** 4.9-litre straight six

1958 CHEVROLET DELRAY

OWNED SINCE: 2005 ENGINE: 5.7-litre V8

1972 TRIUMPH TR6 PROJECT

OWNED SINCE: 2019 ENGINE: 2500cc straight six

1974 MINI MARCOS PROJECT

OWNED SINCE: 2015 ENGINE: Cooper-spec 1100cc A-series

1984 DODGE CAMPERVAN

OWNED SINCE: 2009 ENGINE: 6-litre V8

1990 ROVER MINI COOPER RSP

OWNED: since 2016 **ENGINE:** 1275cc A-series

1992 JEEP CHEROKEE

OWNED SINCE: 2006 ENGINE: 4-litre straight six

l992 MAZDA MX5 **SUNBURST**

OWNED SINCE: 2015 ENGINE: 1600cc

199X COBRA REPLICA PROJECT

OWNED SINCE: 2007 ENGINE: currently 4.6-litre Ford V8

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

When you have so many cars to list, there's not much room left for thinking.

Lessons from an MX5 handbrake



What's wrong with this picture? That's right, somebody has forgotten to put an axle stand under the car, and has even forgotten to slide the removed road wheel under the car to limit the injuries. Somebody is risking a visit to casualty or a funeral parlour.

- Reposition B-post on prototype Cloud conversion
- · Re-bush distributor on MKVI Bentley
- Build Marcos and Cobra
- · Sell TR6 project
- Too much to mention!

esson 1: Just because it's new doesn't mean it works. Lesson 2: Don't use secondhand brake parts.

Lesson 3: Don't use G-clamps on MX5 rear calipers.

You're actually lucky to have the annual MoT test in the UK for modern classics, although it may not seem that way sometimes. But it keeps older cars in reasonable

shape, it spreads the cost year by year, and it stops your cars deteriorating so far that they have to be thrown away. We don't have an annual test in BC because accidents caused by poor car condition are so rare they don't even show in the statistics – virtually all accidents are caused by carelessness, drunks and texters.

My MX5 is used pretty well every day. The fuel economy of the 1600cc NA MX5 is useful compared to four-litre Bentleys and Jeeps, because there's price gouging on petrol here as there

is in most places.

For a daily driver, it's particularly important to have a working handbrake, (or e-brake as they call it here, meaning emergency brake). Some handbrake problems are down to corrosion and other mechanical and cable issues, but many bad handbrakes on Mazdas are due to nonspecialist mechanics and handson owners using the traditional and standard methods to squeeze the rear brake pistons back into the calipers to make room for putting new brake pads in, which is often a G-clamp. This works fine with most hydraulic calipers, but the handbrake adjustment on the MX5 rear brake calipers is mechanical, and using a G-clamp just mangles it.

By law there has to be a separate mechanical arrangement apart from the main hydraulic system for operating the handbrake, and indeed there is on the Mazda – but some of the parts are used by both the hydraulic and the mechanical operating systems. If not mangled by brutalisation with a G-clamp, the system works fine. It's weird that people carry on forcing the piston back when



As a matter of principle, brake parts should be changed for new rather than used. As a matter of not wasting time and money, MX5 rear calipers are often toast, even some reconditioned ones. If they're not brand new, check their function before fitting them.

DRIVER'S Diar



ABOVE: The little cog that adjusts the piston seemed to be in good condition, but the hidden internal mechanism was damaged and wouldn't stay adjusted for more than a day.

RIGHT: Carelessness led to a scrapped disc and a new pair fitted. Using brake cleaner to take the protective grease off the new discs while still in the box reduces the mess.

there's obviously something wrong, but that's what they do. Changing pads, calipers and discs is an easy enough job to tackle yourself, but crucially, the pistons need to be wound back into the callipers using a hex tool and the little adjuster on the caliper.

Many people don't know about this. You never know when it's the smart (if counterintuitive) move to read a manual, and this is one such time. If you have to use a garage or a tyre-and-brake centre for changing pads or discs, make sure they know how the piston adjustment is done. General mechanics can't be expected to know all the detailed quirks of all cars, so make sure it's made crystal clear to the individual who will be doing the job on yours.

My NA Sunburst's handbrake could always be adjusted up just fine, but it would loosen off and stop working within a week. This means the internal



was finally the scraping of the worn-out metal brake pad base on one of the rear discs that made me deal with the handbrake: if I'd been less lazy and had bothered to check the pad wear, I would have saved the cost of a pair of new discs. Unfortunately the MX5 spoils me by cheerfully bimbling along past 160,000 miles without any issues.

I'm cheap, and my friend Pete the Miata Man had a pair of secondhand calipers apparently in good condition. We checked that the adjusters on each caliper seemed to be pulling the pistons in and out, then fitted them to the car. The handbrake grabbed like a politician to power for a day or two, then de-adjusted itself and I was

mechanisms of the caliper adjusters are damaged and not holding their position. It

back to square one. This was on both of the secondhand calipers, not just one. Okay. Time to stop messing about and just pony up for a

pair of reconditioned calipers. Changing them over after a few days was much easier than after 30 years. Adjust the first caliper and set the piston position – no handbrake at all. What the hell? Pull out the little adjusting gear from the shiny new recon caliper, and

it's mangled. In a supposedly freshly reconditioned

Don't forget to keep topping up the brake fluid reservoir while you are bleeding the brakes, although it is also a very good idea to regularly bleed fresh fluid all the way through the system to reduce the chance of moisture leading to rust in the wheel cylinders.

> caliper. Ridiculous. Let's check the other freshly reconditioned caliper before we waste any time fitting it. OK, that one works – fit that and we have a handbrake, on one side at least.

> The next replacement new 'reconditioned' caliper will be dismantled and checked on the sales counter of the parts store. They may not be pleased about that. Tough. If you spanner your own earlier MX5, it might be useful to know that there's a fuller version of this story with 25 pictures at www. CM

MiataMag.com

LEFT: Here's the shiny reconditioned caliper that doesn't work. The adjuster is wrecked, and it is no better than the 30-year-old originals. Grrr.



Actually we did remember to put an axle stand under the car. If you don't back up the jack with axle stands, don't put anything under the car that you want to use again. Such as your arm or your head.

"You never know when it's the smart (if counter-intuitive) move to read a manual, and this is one such time"



Simon Goldsworthy Editor

Simon always has too many projects on the go, which means progress on individual cars can sometimes be slow. On the bright side, it does mean he never gets stuck watching telly of an evening. He like virtually all classics, but has a weak spot for anything small, basic and generally overlooked.





TOURER

ENGINE: 1009cc sidevalve four **OWNED SINCE: 2013**

1966 HERALD CONVERTIBLE

ENGINE: 1493cc OHV four **OWNED SINCE: 2012**

1983 ACCLAIM

ENGINE: 1335cc OHC four **OWNED SINCE: 2015**

2005 MG TF135

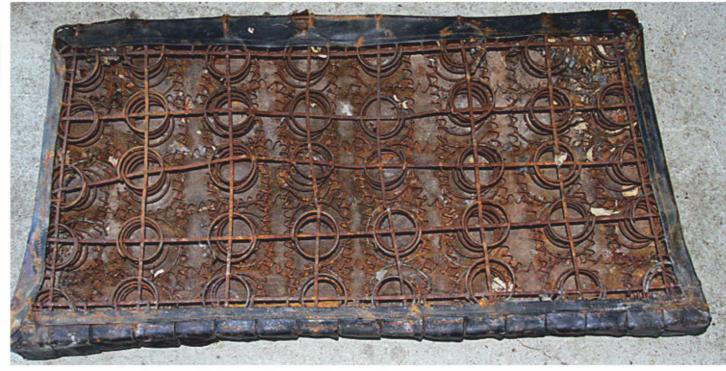
ENGINE: 1796cc DOHC four **OWNED SINCE: 2018**

To-do list . Continue with

- Standard interior
- Replace timing belt on the TF
 Free clutch actuating

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

One beauty of working on what is essentially a prewar car is that because so much of it was originally built by hand, so much of it can rebuilt that way today. Machine-made components on later cars can be far trickier to replicate.



Sprung seat base was in poor shape, with rusty springs, rotten leather and a broken metal frame.

Small but important steps

his month, I finally had a little spare time which could be spent in the garage working on the Standard. To briefly recap, I bought this as a total restoration six years ago and it has progressed in fits and starts since then. I took it back to a bare chassis, built that up and packed the body off to

welding maestro Andy Dann who bravely took on the panel restoration and paint.

The mechanical restoration was completed some time ago and in theory the Standard has been on the road for a couple of years, but it still needs the soft furnishings. In this regard, I had long ago paid a substantial sum to have the

front seats that came with the car restored. Unfortunately they turned out to be from a very early Morris Minor, and too tall for the Standard! With the way the legs splayed out, they could not be adapted to fit without stripping them again, rebuilding the frames and then starting again, so I took the financial hit and sold them on.

My attempts to buy a pair of original Standard seats proved fruitless, so my thoughts turned instead to the Herald ones that I had spare after fitting Mazda chairs to the Triumph. With a bit of trial and error, these went in the Standard a treat using some blocks of American walnut to lift them to the right height this is a very hard wood that also looks rather splendid. Having those seats in place then set the colour scheme for the interior – it would be Matador Red, which went very nicely with the Citroën



The metal frame was welded, and each spring was separated, cleaned, painted and then reassembled with elastic webbing.



Pronged T fixings were used to secure the wooden seat back to the T-hinges using pan head machine screws.

DRIVER'S Diar



There are two of these hinges. Originally the seat back would have been bare, but Simon elected to cover his.

Gazelle Beige paint. (The car had been black originally, and I didn't fancy sticking with that. Having converted it to 12 volts and fitted things like flashing indicators, fuses and relays, I was never aiming for concours originality anyway.)

The original back seat had come in the many boxes of bits that constituted the Standard when I bought it, but with some very mouldy and rotted leather. Fortunately, Andy Dann's wife Wendy is a talented seamstress and, having retrimmed my MX5 seats in Matador Red for the Herald, did the same with the Standard's back seat.

The seat base is a bit like a mattress, made up as it is from a number of coil springs wired together in a steel frame. This was in a poor state, so I stripped it down to its component parts, cleaned everything up with wire brushes in a drill, welded up



The seam across the top was hidden behind Hidem banding - the gimp pins knock in and disappear between the two ridges.

the broken bits and painted everything black. It doesn't sound much when you say it like this, but it took me ages! I, then built it back up, but used elastic webbing to hold the springs together rather than the original coiled wire.

The refurbished and recovered seat base simply dropped into the recess above the differential, but the seat back consists of a padded cover over a plywood board, and this had to be secured to two very large T-hinges. Having made a new seat back out of 12mm plywood, I used pronged Ts for the hinges. These provide a very strong and unobtrusive fixing in relatively thin sheet material – having drilled holes through the wood to take the threaded portion of the fixing, I could hammer the pronged section into the front face of the panel. Then, after I'd

reattached Wendy's cover, the hinges could be secured from the other side using pan head machine screws.

This left just one more problem to be solved – how was the seat back secured in the upright position? Fortunately another member of the Standard Motor Club sent me some pictures of his car, and I took that as my inspiration. Firstly, I cut and sewed up a tab of the Matador Red vinyl about the size of my middle finger, then punched out a hole and fitted a lift-thedot fastener to it. The post that this would attach to simply screwed into the wooden rail that ran across the top of the boot behind the rear seat.

I then tried fixing the tab to the seat back using round-head wood screws, but the vinyl proved too stretchy and when I pulled it to secure the seat

back in its upright position, the screws pulled through the vinyl holes. So I had to take the cover off again and fit pronged Ts here too. Then I made up a metal former with a curved end that went beneath the screw heads and supported the vinyl, also giving it a gentle curve as the tab is pulled back and secured. Finally I bought some Hidem banding that went along the visible seam on the back of the seat and, as the name implies, hid it from view.

All of this may sound like a relatively minor job, but how to secure the seat back was a problem that had been exercising my little grey cells for some time. It is very hard to rebuild a car that you didn't take apart, especially if you don't have all the bits you need or a local car for reference, so however small it might seem, I am chalking this one up as a major victory.



A simple strip of aluminium gives structure and strength to the tab and stops the screws pulling out.

"Some Hidem banding, as the name implies, hid it from view"



To secure the seat back in the upright position, Simon made up this tab with a vinyl offcut and used a lift-the-dot fastener.



And here it is, secured in position and looking great with Wendy's new cover that matches the Herald front seats.

Mike Taylor

Contributor

Mike is based in Australia and although his Stag and E-type have both been restored to a very high standard, both still require regular maintenance.

MY FLEET

1965 E-TYPE

ENGINE: 4235cc inline-six **OWNED SINCE:** September 1986



TRIUMPH STAG

ENGINE: 2997cc V8 **OWNED SINCE: 2004**

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

My experience with the voltage regulator shows that you should always thoroughly inspect (and if possible test) every new component that you purchase prior to fitment. I have experienced a few failures of newly sourced electrical items, however I am loath to heap too much blame on the suppliers. I have worked in and around low volume industrial manufacturing all my life and you are always walking that tightrope between quality and cost – if you go for top quality, few customers purchase due to price and if you go for low cost, you frequently get quality problems and customer complaints. Therefore in my book, the stockist and manufacturer of the failed regulator deserve a tick for excellent customer service rather than a thumbs down for product quality.

Voltage regulator failures



The instrument panel is pulled forward to access the voltage regulator which can be seen on the back of the speedometer.

n the way home from a recent journey in the Stag, I noticed that the fuel gauge was not giving any reading. I had filled up a couple of days earlier and the gauge had been indicating ¾ full earlier in the day, so I did not think there was any immediate danger of running out and suspected I had a problem with the gauge or its wiring. It seemed unlikely that it was a fuse issue as the gauge shares a fuse with indicators and tacho and these were still operating perfectly, however I did use a voltage tester to double check.

Access to the fuel gauge requires unscrewing the main wooden instrument panel and

pulling it forwards. This is a bit of a fiddle, so I decided to first check the voltage at the fuel tank level sender, which required removal of the boot carpet and bottom boards. The gauge circuit operates by power being fed from an ignitionswitched fuse through a 10v voltage regulator to the gauge, then on to the tank sender and via a variable resistor to earth. As the ignition has to be switched on during the gauge checking, I removed the live feed at the coil to cut power to both the coil and electronic distributor to prevent possible overheating and damage to these items. The wire from the gauge was disconnected at



Whilst waiting for the replacement voltage regulator to arrive from the UK, Mike used the down time to weld up the wiper frame.

To-do list

- Investigate tight window winder operation in the Jaguar

 • Cure the slow operation
- of the Stag passenger door window
- Replace some of the
- Jaguar light gaskets
 Replace Jaguar static seat belts with retractable

the sender and a meter used to check between this wire and earth – a zero reading confirmed the issue was at the gauge or intermediate wiring, and I had to access the rear of the instrument panel.

It is easier to remove the instrument panel with the steering wheel out of the way, so that was removed first, followed by the four panel securing screws, allowing the panel to be pulled forwards sufficiently to check the voltage at the gauge terminals. Both indicated zero, so tracking back to the voltage regulator (attached to the back of the speedometer) confirmed no voltage output, but there was 12v at the input terminal.

So a failed 10v regulator was diagnosed. This is screwed to the back of the speedometer, but the speedometer cable prevented me from pulling the

DRIVER'S Diay



The failed regulator had solid state components mounted on a printed circuit. The old design is pictured on the left of it.

panel forward sufficiently to access the regulator's retaining screw. So, after disconnecting the cable it seemed easier to remove the speedometer and investigate further.

A bench test confirmed the voltage regulator was indeed defective. Looking through my boxes of electrical components I was able to locate an old regulator, but a quick test indicated unreliable output voltage so sourcing a new replacement seemed a better alternative. I tried a number of Australian suppliers, but price seemed very high, so I checked on the AES website and found that purchasing two units with freight was cheaper than buying one locally, and this would give me a spare as the Jaguar uses an identical unit.

As delivery would take a week or so, I took the time to fix other items. The wiper blade holder on the Stag's driver side uses stainless steel wires on the frame which are retained by spot welds. One of the welds had broken, so the wiper was removed and the frame clamped to a thick copper sheet so I could reattach the wire with a small MIG weld using 0.6mm stainless steel welding wire.

Clamping the holder to the copper in this way provided several advantages – it held the two parts together, it quickly dissipated the heat so I did not inadvertently burn through the wire and, being copper, I knew that the weld would not adhere to it. Whilst I was working on the wipers, I took a trip down to the local motor factor and purchased a new pair of rubber blades for good measure.

Out of interest I pulled the failed voltage regulator apart and was surprised to find that it had solid state internals. This was not what I expected, and removing the cover from my old stock unit revealed that this was of the conventional design with a heated bimetal strip that rapidly opens and closes a contact, effectively reducing output voltage.

In about 10 days the two replacements arrived. One was fitted to the back of the speedometer, which was then clamped into the dash and all cables and electrical items



The second voltage regulator was successfully tested on the bench prior to fitting to the car, good practice with all new components.

reconnected so that I could test the gauge. Imagine my disbelief when, with ignition on, there was still no reading on the fuel gauge! I had not screwed the wooden panel into the dash or refitted the steering wheel, so I pulled the panel forward and the meter confirmed zero output from the replacement regulator. I thought I may have forgotten to connect the earth wire to the speedometer body as the regulator needs an earth connection, but a continuity check confirmed that the speedo body was earthed and there was 12v input and that the new regulator was also faulty. Once again the speedometer and its associated connections were removed, but prior to fitting the second new regulator, it was bench tested



A box of goodies for the Jaguar took only four days to transport to Australia from England.

first to confirm 10v output before being attached to the speedometer. I would normally bench test a component prior to fitting, so was annoyed with myself for omitting the test, which resulted in the fix taking much longer than it should.

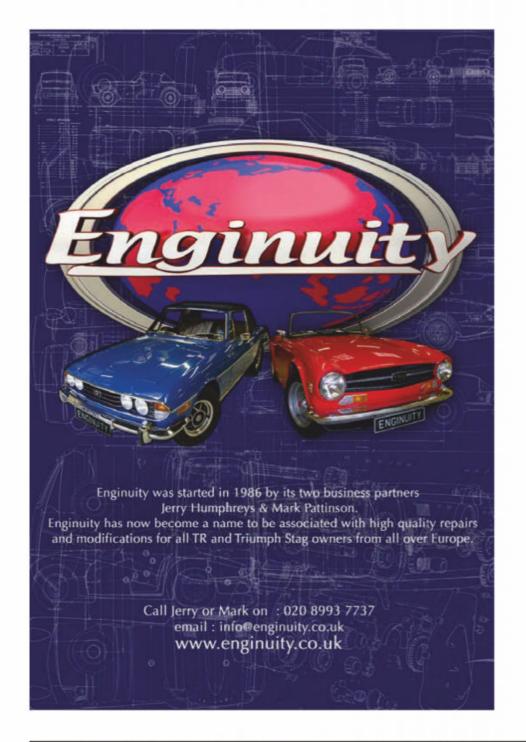
I contacted AES and copied in the manufacturer, explaining about the faulty regulator and requesting a replacement. AES promptly sent a replacement, and the manufacturer also emailed and advised they had a local distributor and would ensure that I was not disadvantaged – excellent customer service from both

In other news, I have recently undertaken several 200-300km runs in the Jaguar which has confirmed how much easier it is to drive on our less than perfect roads, where it runs arrow straight against the Stag's wandering tendencies. I think this is due to the increased caster on the E which I set at 1.75°. The Stag has less than 1°, which I would like to increase to the specified 2.5°.

"Tracking back to the voltage regulator confirmed no voltage output, but 12v at the input terminal"



It was second time lucky, but now the fuel gauge on the Stag is now operational once more.





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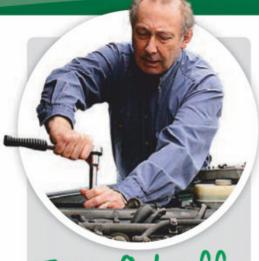
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Sharing the Passion

DRIVER'S Diary



Ivan Ostroff Contributor

None of the cars in Ivan's stable are in concours condition, but all are in proper mechanical order and in continual use. He believes in using classics in the way they were designed to be used: simply driven every day.

MY FLEET



1989 JAGUAR XJ6

ENGINE: 3590cc inline-six **OWNED SINCE: 2007**



1988 JAGUAR XJ40

ENGINE: 3590cc inline-six **OWNED SINCE: 2015**



1982 RMB GENTRY

ENGINE: 1296cc inline-four **OWNED SINCE**: 2012

To-do list

- Lubricate door handles again on the XJ6 and the Sovereign.
- · Replace heater fan and footwell ducting on XJ6.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

To own the latest models before their neighbours, every few years thousands of people trade in perfectly good cars for a fraction of what they cost new. How lucky are we, content with the pleasures of owning our classics?



The headlining was hanging down from the sunroof, making the interior look very untidy.

Finishing the headlining

he headlining was replaced in the Jaguar XJ6 over a year ago and it still looks perfect. However, the kit which comprised pre-fitted headlining on a GRP board – did not include a separate panel for the sunroof. This being the case, the company kindly supplied me with sufficient headlining material to deal with the sun roof later. The headlining material covering the small area of the sunroof was a little grubby, but was otherwise sound so the job was put off.

However, more recently the cloth covering began to fall to pieces and the material started hanging down, so now it had to be dealt with. I wanted to be sure that the sunroof would look as good as the rest of the recently replaced headlining, so instead of dealing with this on my own, I decided to enlist the help of trim expert Peter Jay, who helped me to replace the headlining in the Sovereign.

Removing the metal sunroof panel was fairly straightforward. After opening the roof, the securing screws along its front edge become easily accessible with the roof almost fully open. Once the screws are out of the way, the panel can be jiggled out of position and removed.

Next, the roof was moved

forward until almost closed. In that position, the remaining screws and plastic twist clips that retain the interior sunroof headlining panel in place can be removed. None of the screws were rusty, so they did not present any extra problems. A couple of the plastic clips were a bit stubborn, but they too all came out eventually.

Now the panel itself could be lifted clear. Once out of the car, the material virtually fell away. After clearing off any residue of old material, the panel was then laid down on the new material whilst the cloth was cut to size. Peter then sprayed

the headlining panel with contact adhesive before skilfully laying the new material in place, making sure there were no trapped air bubbles. The panel was then turned over so that the edges of the material could be folded over and stuck down. Finally, any excess material was cut away with a sharp blade.

The newly covered panel was then ready to be refitted to the car. Some of the plastic retaining clips did take a little persuading before they would twist into place, but eventually with a little patience they all went back. However, when

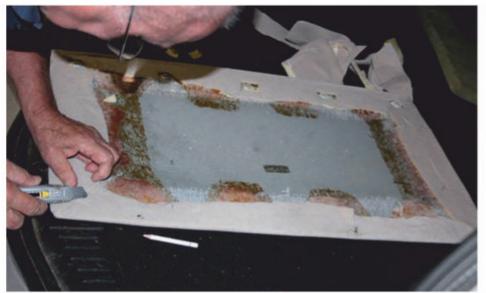


After removing the metal sunroof panel, the clips and screws retaining the headlined interior panel become accessible.

DRIVER'S Diary



The new headlining material is cut to size around the interior panel of the sunroof and then glued into position with contact adhesive.

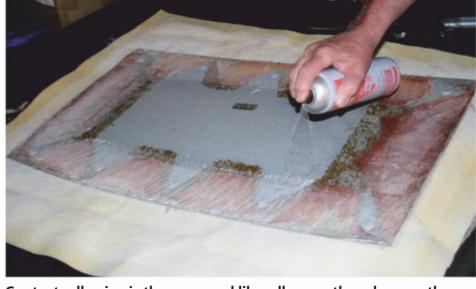


After the material has been stuck down to the panel, a sharp blade is used to trim away any overlap of cloth.

we tried to retract the roof, it refused to slide more than half way back. Closer investigation showed there was a very small area where the material had been folded back over the top of the panel and was fouling. After very carefully pulling the edge of the material back, it was trimmed slightly so that there was no area where the

cloth was double thickness and then it was stuck back in place. This did the trick, and the panel now moved back and forth easily.

The metal roof panel could then be replaced. However, getting it back squarely into its channels was a pain. After much fiddling and jiggling around, at last it slid squarely



Contact adhesive is then sprayed liberally over the edges on the reverse side of the interior panel and the material folded over.



When refitting the roof panel, the screws and clips must be replaced cautiously to avoid marking the material.

into place. The securing screws were then re-fitted without issue. To be certain that it was quite free, we then tested the operation of the roof several times and were relieved to see everything worked as it should. With the sunroof and the rest of the headlining looking just as good as new, the appearance of the Jaguar's interior is now

"Getting it back squarely into its channels was a pain. After much fiddling and jiggling, at last it slid squarely into place"

totally transformed.

Following that job, when Denis Bourne came over to gasup the Jaguar's air-conditioning system, we discovered that the righthand heater fan was not working and, rather strangely, the plastic trunking to the footwell is missing. So now I need to find a replacement fan and trunking.



After sliding the external roof panel back into position, its retaining screws are easy enough to relocate and secure in position.



It was well worth doing as once the job was finished, the appearance of the interior had been totally transformed.

DRIVER'S Diary



Gerard Hughes Contributor

Gez has long been giving a home to hopeless cases, with both his NSU and Mazda being rescued from the clutches of the scrap man. Although he constantly promises he won't do it again, he's currently waist deep in a Land Rover project and rediscovering just how rusty and seized BL fixings can be.

MY FLEET

1980 SWB LAND

ENGINE: 2286cc inline four **OWNED SINCE:** Sept 2017

1975 AUSTIN 1800

ENGINE: 1798cc inline four **OWNED SINCE:** April 2009

1972 NSU PRINZ 4L

ENGINE: 596cc air-cooled twin **OWNED SINCE:** May 2008

1991 EUNOS ROADSTER

ENGINE: 1590cc inline four **OWNED SINCE:** May 2013

To-do list

- Take time to evaluate the fleet, and make some tough decisions.
- · Restart work on the Land Rover. The underbonnet metal work still needs to be fitted, and the remaining body panels need finishing.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Never overlook the obvious. Recently we tried to start a friend's classic that had been recommissioned after long term storage. Lack of fuel had us stumped and checking every possible component, pricing up parts and generally chasing our tails – until he noticed we'd not reconnected the electric fuel pump...

Too many cars, too little time

egular readers will recall that my last diary in the August issue was a tale of woe and non-functioning Lucas electrics. Despite my best efforts, the Landcrab's starter motor had finally called it a day, and even flatting the commutator with wet-and-dry paper and blowing 40 years of dust off the carbon brushes wasn't bringing it back to life.

Finding a replacement was proving tricky, but Editor Simon made the suggestion that maybe I should call on professional services. I must admit that I wasn't entirely convinced because the Landcrab has always been run on an absolute shoestring, and has performed pretty well on that basis. Plus, I had taken the starter motor to pieces and to my eyes it didn't look that bad. However, when my search for a new or reconditioned starter motor failed to turn up anything, I finally gave in and took the old unit along to a specialist, even though I was still convinced that they would find nothing wrong.

RH Auto Electrical Services in Ledbury had been recommended by a mate in the motor trade and were reasonably local to me, so I called proprietor Rob and explained the situation. He chuckled, said he'd reconditioned many of the type over the years and then reeled off a long list of possible faults.



The Landcrab starter was removed once again and clearly marked up with Gez's name – just in case the specialists suddenly found themselves snowed under with Austin/Morris 1800 starter motors!

And is it turned out, my starter had most of them! I dropped the motor off with Rob, and he called back within a couple of hours, saying that the brush pack was shot, the bearings were all dry and binding, and there were signs that the unit had been overloaded and the connector post was burnt out – probably due to the motor fighting against the stuck bearings. Oh, and just for good measure the solenoid pivot was also worn out. It was a timely lesson in just how much had escaped my non-expert eye, and how some jobs are best left to the pros.



Returned just a couple of days later, it looked better than new.

To my surprise, all the parts needed to repair the unit are available, and a couple of days later Rob returned it to me, looking better than new. More importantly, it now works a treat – the Landcrab spins up happily on the key, and no longer will I be filled with dread every time I park it somewhere and wonder whether it will restart when I return. The only downside is that it has been fixed just in time for the weather to change and make using it less likely. My fault I guess, for prevaricating so long.

Talking of prevarication, a reader contacted the magazine recently, wondering what was happening with the NSU and asking what my plans were for the car. I have to admit that it was a bit of a wake-up call after the summer of 2019 had passed in a blur due to new work



All connections, fixings and bearings had been replaced.

DRIVER'S Diary



The starter had shown signs of overloading, so Rob at RHAE Services who reconditioned it recommended that all mating surfaces were cleaned to ensure a good connection.



A quick rub down with some abrasive cloth cleaned off the accumulated oxidation and muck on the bellhousing around the attachment area and Gez was ready to refit the starter motor.



Back in place, in the depths of the engine bay. It's great to have an engine which kicks into life at the touch of the key once again.



The Land Rover project has stalled a little in recent months, and the rear tub, bonnet and tailgate are all still awaiting paint.

commitments. The NSU has been moved and road tested a couple of times, but nothing more, while the Mazda has not been troubled at all. Any spare time I've been able to muster this year has been devoted to the Land Rover, and even that is woefully behind schedule.

I've always known that I have

too many cars, but up until now I have at least been able to justify it with the claim that they all get used. Clearly this is no longer true and it's time to shake up the fleet, if only to free up some funds to allow the current projects to progress. Unlike many owners, I'm lucky in that I have plenty of dry

storage, but that is a doubleedged sword because it means that if a car does get tucked in a corner under a sheet for a few months, it is no big deal. And a few months can quickly turn into a couple of years.

But I am of the opinion that these are cars, not ornaments or trophies, and that they should

be driven and enjoyed. It's going to be a tough call as to which if any are sold as all the cars have been rescued and would have been scrapped long ago if I hadn't stepped in, but I don't think I can stand by and watch them sit unused for another year. I'll let you know what I decide in my next diary. CM

"It was a lesson in just how much had - some jobs are best left to the pros"



BUSSIES

Troubleshooting with Steve Rothwell

Our helpful Q&A hotline may be able to solve your classic-related problems, so why not email us at classics.ed@kelsey.co.uk and we'll do our best to help.



AUSTIN MAESTRO TEMPERATURE READING

I have a 1984 Maestro 1.3L which has a problem with an erratic temperature gauge. Both the coolant temperature warning light and the gauge indicate that the cooling system is overheating, but the engine itself is obviously not as hot as indicated. The coolant temperature is monitored by a thermistor, which I have changed. Before I purchased the vehicle, the carburettor stepper motor has been removed, and a manual choke fitted by the previous owner. As this has been removed, is the ECU still needed? If it is not, can I wire the temperature gauge straight into the thermistor or do I need a new temperature sender unit?

John Hancock

As your Maestro has now been fitted with a manual choke system, the temperature gauge does need to be wired directly.

You should check the ECU and if it has not been converted, disconnect the green/ blue tracer wire from terminal 13 on the unit and extend this cable so that it reaches the thermistor. **Disconnect the existing cable** and tape it out of the way, then fit a single terminal sender unit (the original part number is GTR143) and connect the extended green/blue cable to its terminal. This directly wires the gauge to the sender and should mean you now get an accurate temperature reading.



The end plate which covers the clutch operation mechanism should be replaced.

VW VENTO

GEARBOX OIL LEAK

I have a 1994 VW Vento 1.8i which has the five-speed manual gearbox fitted. After noticing a couple of drips of oil on the garage floor, I have traced the source of the leak to the metal cover on the end of the gearbox (by the wheelarch). There are a few marks on the cover, and it looks as though it may be slightly distorted, indicating that at some point in the past it has been removed and refitted. Is this leak something that I could consider repairing, or is it a gearbox specialist type job?

Adrian Hurst

The circular cover which the oil is seeping from covers up the clutch release mechanism. With the cover removed you should see the release arm, which acts upon the bearing which then pushes the release rod through the centre of the gearbox to act on the clutch release plate. This cover does not have a seal and relies on being a good fit to prevent oil loss, although the chamber behind the plate should not be full of oil in any case.

By supporting the gearbox on a jack, undoing the mounting and then dropping it slightly, you should gain good access to the plate. Removing the old plate and fitting a new one is quite a simple job, and hopefully one you can complete yourself.

FIAT TIPO

DASH TROUBLE

I have a 1989 Fiat Tipo with the analogue dash (not the one with the digital display). This has developed a problem and will sometimes – whilst moving at any speed – suddenly display that I am travelling at 120mph. This can happen whilst moving either forward or in reverse, and will occur at speeds as low as 1mph. Turning the ignition off will allow the needle to drop back down to zero. I am not worried that I might actually be travelling at 120mph, but my biggest concern at the moment is that when this happens the odometer clocks up the mileage as if I were travelling at that speed, and so this is affecting the low mileage status of my Tipo. Before I start looking for a replacement speedometer, are there any other checks I can carry out?

Brian Stewart



Many Fiat Tipos used a digital display dash, but some had the analogue version like this one.

The speedometer on your Fiat is, as you no doubt realise, controlled by the electrical sender unit on the gearbox. Whilst it is unlikely that the pulses sent from the sender are the cause of the problem, I would initially disconnect this to see if the speedometer still shoots up to the maximum mark. You will have to do this in a car park or private area, as driving on the road with the speedo inoperative would be inadvisable.

I would also check the connections

to the speedometer. There are three connections used to operate the speedometer – a live feed via a fuse from the ignition, an earth to the vehicle body and the feed wire from the gearbox sensor. The fault is more likely to be in the speedo head though, and there are a couple of firms who should be able to test and if required – repair the unit for you. Either www.atpelectronics.co.uk or www.clusterrepairsuk.co.uk may be able to help you.



MERCEDES 190E

ROUGH IDLE FROM COLD

I have a minor problem with my 1991 Mercedes 190E which is fitted with the Bosch KE Injection system (precat). Most of the time when I start the engine, it runs smoothly whether it is hot or cold. Just occasionally when starting from cold though, the engine needs a couple of goes before it will fire up, then it will tick over at around 500-600rpm for a few seconds before it picks up and fast idles at around 1000rpm. The car then drives perfectly.

After driving for around a mile, the tick-over drops back to 750rpm and runs well. I have never had a problem starting from hot. I have checked the fuel enrichment when cold with a CO meter and it is fine. Suspecting that the auxiliary air valve may be faulty, I cleaned it out with carb cleaner, but this has made no improvement. Should I replace it? **Simon Hughes**

 \bigwedge A problem with the auxiliary air valve would not normally affect the starting, but there is always an exception that proves the rule. However, the engine idling problem is most likely to be associated with the auxiliary air valve, and this may



The idle air control valve may be sticking, causing idle problems on this Mercedes 190E.

be related to the electrical side of the operation. To pinpoint the source of your problem, start with the engine cold and running on fast idle (around 1000rpm), squeeze or clamp the hose at the valve to shut off the air flow and the idle speed should drop. If you repeat this test when the engine is warm and running at a normal idle speed (around 750rpm), then the idle speed should remain the same. If this is not the case then the valve may well be faulty. To test the electrical side, unplug the connector and ensure that when the ignition is on it has a positive supply and a good earth. Then using an ohm meter check for the resistance across the two terminals on the valve. There should be a small resistance or around 40 ohms. An open circuit will also indicate a problem with the valve.

VOLVO 440

STARTER PROBLEMS

I am hoping you can help me to clear up a problem which I have with my 1989 Volvo 440 GLT with the 1.7 injection engine. Two or three times a week after I have been for a run in the car and then return and attempt to start it up, all I hear is a clunk. The starter does not turn, but after about five attempts it will then fire into life and the engine will start OK. My local mechanic has suggested that the starter motor is at fault, but what confuses me is that this problem will never occur when starting first thing in the morning, only after the vehicle has been used for a short or long run. I am of course quite happy to have a new starter fitted, but I do want to be sure that is the

Barry Tirrill

The symptoms you have do point to a faulty starter, and it is quite common for the starter to only fail when warm. The reason for this is

The connections at the terminals should be checked as well as the condition on the short wire, all as indicated by the arrows.

that the internal windings in the starter can become fractured and when they expand with the heat, any light fracture may then open up, disconnecting the circuit.

Before replacing the starter though, I would check a couple of other connections which can also be affected by the heat. The main starter cable to the solenoid

> can become loose and I would disconnect the battery, then remove and clean the starter cable to the solenoid terminal connection. I would also check the connection on the short cable running

starter motor. If this shows any signs of overheating, this may indicate that the starter is drawing too much current.

from the solenoid to the

Next check the earth connections to the engine and ensure that they are tight. After reconnecting the battery, check the voltage at the starter main terminal; if this is not battery voltage, it will indicate a

problem within the main wire between the battery and starter, and in this case that may be the cause of the problems.

cause before I go ahead.



Got a problem with your classic? Why not email details to us at classics.ed@kelsey.co.uk and we'll try and help.

RANGE ROVER

HOT RUNNING TROUBLE

I have a 1986 Range Rover and have some concerns about the running temperature. I understand from the forums that they do tend to run hot, but mine got so hot that the lower hose burst and expelled all the coolant out across the road. I am sure that the engine shouldn't be running this hot, and was wondering if perhaps the coolant wasn't flowing correctly. Is there something I could use to clear the waterways and radiator? **Harry Phillips**

My first thought is that no, the engine definitely shouldn't be running that hot, though with the age of the vehicle it is of course possible that the bottom hose was perished and would have blown whatever the temperature.

The first check you should make is to ensure that the cooling system is not pressurising due to a failed head gasket. Kits are available to check for CO in the cooling system, and if unsure this may be advisable. Providing this is not the case and there are no signs of a head gasket problem, I would flush the cooling system out and then replace the thermostat. Be warned though that flushing the cooling system using a propriety flush may result in



A new thermostat and a radiator flush may rectify the situation.

a few leaks appearing. That's because it may be the case that in the past a radiator sealant has been used in the system, and this will tend to clog up the cooling system as well as the intended leak. After using a flush, the leaks may return, and will need to be dealt with to prevent further cooling system problems.



FORD XR3I

TYRE WEAR

Over the last few months I have noticed that the rear offside tyre on my 1986 XR3i has begun to wear unevenly, feathering on the outer edge. The rear nearside is fine and the vehicle still drives in a straight line with no vibrations or shimmying on the back. A friend suggested that the rear suspension may be adjustable, but my local tyre centre was not prepared to carry out the adjustment as they say the bushes are perished. Should I look elsewhere to get the adjustment done? I don't want to spend out on new tyres only for them to wear prematurely again.

Trevor Clarke

As you have already correctly assumed, the most likely reason for the rear tyre to wear on one edge would be that the rear suspension alignment is out, effectively scrubbing the tyre on the outer edge and causing the unwanted wear. As your friend has suggested, some adjustment is possible by adding or removing washers to the rear suspension tie rod. But given the age of the vehicle, as with all classic cars – however well looked after and however well stored – the rubber components of the suspension will still perish. It may therefore be worth considering replacing the rear suspension bushes with polyurethane alternatives. The full range is available for your XR3i, and as well as hopefully lasting longer than the original bushes, polyurethane ones are also much easier to fit.

VAUXHALL ASTRA

INTERMITTENT HESITATION

I have a 1983 Vauxhall Astra 1600S hatchback and would appreciate your views on a fault, the solution for which seems to be proving elusive. The vehicle has always been a good starter and other than a slight flutter when first started, (which I put down to the automatic choke,) it performs perfectly.

The ignition module may be at fault, but the terminals should be carefully checked.

The problem which I now have is that occasionally during the first four or five miles of the journey, the engine will suddenly misfire. Most other times I can complete a 25 mile journey without a problem.

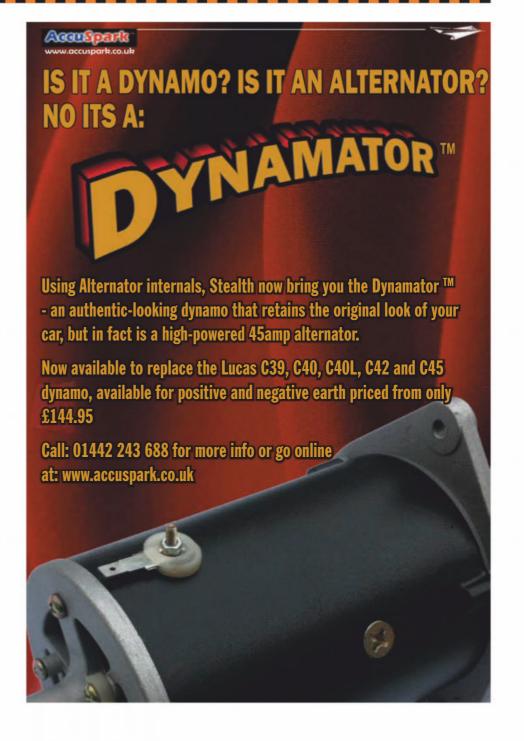
This problem always seems to occur at the early stages of any journey, and when it does happen the rev counter jumps around to the maximum and back, whilst the engine is struggling to keep going. My local garage has checked the fuel lines and choke. They are also considering replacing the coil, ignition module or distributor. The module was replaced 18 months ago for a similar problem. Could it be this again?

Ian Scott

As the rev counter behaves so erratically when the problem occurs, I would certainly say that the problem is with the ignition circuit as opposed to a fuel related problem. You mention that the module was replaced some 18 months ago for a very similar problem, and I believe that this may be a clue to the source of the problem. Whilst it may be the module, it is more likely to be the earth connection to the module which is causing the issue. Using an ohm meter, you should check the continuity on the wire coming from terminal 2 on the module. If the module is not earthing correctly this may have caused premature failure, but you may be lucky enough to resolve the problem by securing a good earth connection.







PROJECT ESCORT PT6 PAINT AND POLISH

After the initial preparations for our Escort's bodywork repairs, we finish cutting out the rot and respray the repaired car back to its former Celtic Bronze glory. Report by Aaron McKay



t's really only when you get into the rust that you truly discover the full extent of the damage that can lurk beneath half decent paintwork. Inevitably, after an initial sanding back of the paint, we found more than was at first obvious on our Mk3 Escort. The process is one that will be familiar to anyone who's dealt with rust before: grind down until you run out of rust and find only solid metal. Naturally the aim is to do this gently and with a degree of patience as you don't want to needlessly grind away good metal in a frenzy of sparks. It's also important to consider the finish, even at this early stage, and that will be all the better for an even and considered approach to the grinding away of material.

There was some mild bubbling in two places on our driver's side front wing near to where it meets the door, just below the area where Paul at Tiger Racing had removed the aerial in last month's episode. Focussing on these patches first, he began to edge away the paint with the sanding disc. Before too long, two quite clear areas where metal was missing took shape. With solid metalwork left polished by the abrasive disc in the grinder, this established an outline of what needed to be cut out.

The pieces cut out are generally rectangular in shape, representing the easiest way to manipulate the tools used and likewise for the replacement pieces that were to be later welded in. As it happened,

the areas on the driver's side wing were roughly to the rectangle anyway, so this made it simple to decide what to cut. What was nearly an issue was their proximity to the edge of the panel. The top section (the largest) was especially close to the edge such that it was uncertain at first if it would be necessary to re-form this part of the panel from the edge. This would have meant removing the door for better access, but fortunately Paul was able to carefully preserve the edge of the panel, which made things a whole lot easier.

This wasn't our worst area of rust. though. We knew that the worst was likely to be the lower front wing on the passenger side, where the effects of rot



Sanding back revealed the full extent of the rust here on the OSF wing.



The section around the rotted away area was carefully cut out...



...until this rectangle was removed, close but not including the panel edge.

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Lower down the wing there was another spot, not quite as large but still requiring the removal of metal.

were visible on the surface of the paintwork - there was not only bubbling, but also a noticeable expansion of the metal here. When Paul began to grind the layers of paint and metalwork away, a hole where the tin worm had been munching began to appear. As before, a section that surrounded the rust was cut out and a plate fashioned to fill the gap. This was tack welded in, then seam welded before any excess metalwork was ground back down.

However, we hadn't finished with our cutting and welding yet. One of the surprise areas of rust that Paul discovered was on the passenger side at the back of the sill by the wheelarch. Quite possibly due to rain flowing from the rain gutter on the roof and down the arch plus muck thrown up by the wheel, there turned out to be quite



A sizeable area was cut out, again near to the edge of the panel. The rest of the area was ground down carefully to reduce the step to the paint.



And here is the new section welded in and ground down to bring everything flush with the surrounding bodywork.



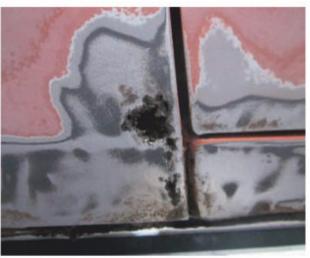
This was how the driver's side wing looked after new metal had been welded in and ground back down.

a serious bit of rot here. Not only that, but it meant that a part of the wheelarch would have to be rebuilt with a new bit of metal. It's always tricky measuring and lining these things up accurately, but with a careful approach – including such wisdoms as measuring twice and cutting once – a suitable repair was made. With this welded in and smoothed back we were finally done with welding. The rest of the areas of rust were minor enough that we only had to grind back to solid metal underneath.

Moving towards the respraying, the next stage was sanding down, first with 40 grit paper. This was done with a wooden block to ensure that the shape of the body was kept true, while the relatively untouched paint around the area was feathered down to make a gradual step to our repair. After applying a thin layer of filler, then waiting to let it set, it was time to sand away again, this time with the DA orbital sander, first at 180 grit, then 320 to prepare it for a coat of two-pack high build filler-primer. This was applied by way of a special primer gun, with a suitably large nozzle to allow the relatively thick primer out. When this primer dried, it was then sanded down to remove any



Rot had also taken hold at the back of the nearside sill in the double-skinned area where it joined the rear arch.



The next area of rot to receive our attention was here, on the lower section of the nearside front wing.

imperfections that remain.

After about three coats of the 2k high build filler-primer, Paul moved onto using a fine primer as a finish for this part of the preparation. To allow all these layers to set properly, we left the car to dry overnight in a place with a good degree of ventilation. Some may be tempted to fast-track the process by putting the car into a painting booth with an oven, but this isn't ideal because as the primer cures, it shrinks. That's why it's best to allow the whole process time if you're looking to avoid cracks or distortions in the finish.

With the primer dry, the body was then ready for the final preparation before the respray. The whole area where we're respraying was smoothed down with 600, then 800 grit, which left the bronze paint



A new plate was fabricated and double checked against the cut-out section ready to be welded in...



...and here it is, welded in and ground back, nearly ready for a thin skim of filler to smooth the surface.

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covered with a white layer as the clearcoat lacquer turned opaque. Then the car went into the painting booth. The first job was to mask over the windows, lights, wheels and other components. Even the door handles stayed, as the bodywork around these was in fine condition and access for masking these wasn't that difficult. What was removed were the sticker strips along the lower doors, as detailed in the previous issue. We could have had all the trim removed for a more comprehensive respray, but given that the general condition of the car was good, we felt this was an appropriate line to draw in the restoration sand. There's always got to be a limit, otherwise the budget of time and money can spiral out of control.

In fact, as Paul pointed out, our rear window was probably best left in because it isn't laminated glass, so removing it would be a risky business that could have ended up with the window shattering into pieces. The rubber trim surrounds are not only cheaper but easier to source than a replacement window, especially if we're looking for one with the original heater element pattern. At some time, though, someone had decided to squirt silicone sealant under the rubber trim. This was the source of some frustration as Paul pulled up the trim to prepare for repainting and there seemed to be a never-ending supply of sealant leaking from underneath. It was just one of those unexpected things to consume a bit of time, but eventually it was sorted and it was probably still easier than cleaning up broken glass.

With the whole car prepared, five layers of base coat were applied, with about 20-



With all the rust removed, filler was then applied before the sanding process began.

30 minutes flash off drying for each coat. Painting the whole car up towards but not including the roof took about two and a half litres of paint. Because this was being blended in, it was crucial to get the colour right. We had found a good basis on which to have the paint measured by external specialists by polishing the roof beforehand and using this for a reading of the colour.

Then it was time for the lacquer. This was mixed up and applied to the car in three coats. Once set, Paul then set to finishing the process by applying 2000 wet and dry

to flat back the finish, before polishing the car back up with a special head on a mop. This cut back the finish to bring out the depth of colour from the fresh paint. To continue this, G3 cutting compound was used, then finished off with what's known as G10 glaze – in effect a finer version of G3. With the thorough polish of our roof



Into the painting booth, the next thing to do was to mask up all the trim that wasn't being removed.



The body was then wiped down to remove any dust or dirt, so that the fresh paint could be applied to an uncorrupted surface.



The Escort's bodywork was fully primered with a filler-primer followed by a fine primer. Then, after drying overnight, it was sanded down ready for painting.



Applying the five layers of base coat took a few hours, including flash drying time of 20-30 minutes per coat.

also done, that was our Escort resprayed and looking as good as new.

Well, nearly. There was still the matter of our side stripes. Using a specialist for reproducing old stickers such as these, we were given fresh new ones to fit. Our old ones were so faded by years of sunlight, however, that we barely recognised these new ones as the right ones for the car. We suspect that our Escort had been parked in the sun for a long time in fact, and in one particular direction because Paul had noticed that the passenger side was more faded than the driver's, and this had also been reflected in the paintwork. But now that we had fresh, vibrant new Celtic Bronze paintwork, it was only appropriate that we had bright new stickers put on. The process is simple enough, so it was just a matter of lining it up straight and then sticking each item onto the lower doors as they were before.

Meanwhile, we hadn't noticed the deteriorated condition of the rear bumper initially because it was the poor front one that truly grabbed our attention, but once we removed it from the rear, it was obvious that to have the car looking good all around



The finished article before the bumpers went back on was looking rather promising – getting colour coat on always transforms a project back into a car!

it would need to be worked down and repainted. The process was the same for both - a combination of sandblasting and sanding. Paul was able to sandblast each end of the bumpers only, for the relatively small sandblasting unit they have in the shop wasn't quite large enough to take the whole bumpers. The remaining untreated sections in the middle of each were sanded down by hand. After this, they were painted back up with a heavy black paint. The decision was made to use a mottled effect paint which not only rather suits the bumpers, but also hides the fact that the front bumper in particular still had a rather rough and pitted surface.

As for the sills, the paint finish on these would have been heavier than the upper panels from the Ford factory, but since 1981 it had yielded to the elements and given space for the corrosion we've had to grind back. To protect it in the future, we upped the coverage to a particularly thick layer of traffic coat paint, in black, before our base

coat went on. This treatment is more in line with modern cars' protection levels, so we can be confident that rust will be held off better than ever from this especially vulnerable area.

And finally, the wheels hadn't really been mentioned specifically on the job sheet, but with the rest of the car beginning to take a proper shine, it was something that became obviously in want of doing. While they weren't in poor condition, a quick run down with the DA orbital sander with 180 grit removed the few minor imperfections before a degrease and aerosol spray brought them back up to a similarly gleaming finish as the paintwork. The exhaust tip was similarly wanting, so this was also given a quick lick of paint and when finished helped to complete the whole look of a freshly redone car.

So now the Escort was ready, and I could barely believe my eyes as it came out of Tiger Racing – it was gleaming like a new car, and I was more excited than ever to take a spin back to the office. Such is the



Black traffic paint was applied to the vulnerable sills for additional protection to modern standards. This was done before base coat was put onto the whole car.

INSURANCE TOP TIPS FROM ADRIAN FLUX:

- 1. If you only use your classic car for shows and special occasions, you may be able to negotiate a lower limited mileage premium.
- 2. Belonging to a car or owner's club can secure a discount of up to 15% off your insurance
- 3. Almost 80% of all customers receiving an online quote* could have obtained a cheaper quote over the phone
- * Data taken from September 2018

way with shiny paintwork that it makes the whole car so much more appealing to drive! Of course a classic car custodian's work is never done, and in the time since it was with Q-prep for mechanical work, there have been a couple of items added to the to-do list. From the reports of other drivers not grown accepting and eventually blind to the nuances of the gear selection, I've realised that the gear linkage isn't as sharp as Ford would have originally intended. As much as I insist that it's a lovely change once you have the knack, it would be a benefit to look into improvements. Then there's the boot strut that has clearly seen better days. At present it's best held up with a neatly integrated bit of plastic pipe rather than any pressure held in the strut itself. Finally, now that our car is looking as fresh as can be on the outside, there's more obviously some work to do on the inside to bring up the condition of the seat fabric. Well, work has already begun on these bits, so join us next month to see how we got on.



Wheels were sanded down with 180 grit via a DA orbital sander, then given a new coat of silver paint to bring them up to the standard of the rest of the car.



We kept the rear window in place, simply lifting the rubber seals to paint around and under them.



Door handles were kept on during the respray as well, but the finish around them looks as good as everything else.



The Mk3 is more inviting than ever now thanks to its brilliant new paint job.



Freshly painted sills look great, and should remain looking so for years to come thanks to extensive protection.

INSURANCE QUOTE FOR A 1982 FORD ESCORT MK3 FROM ADRIAN FLUX

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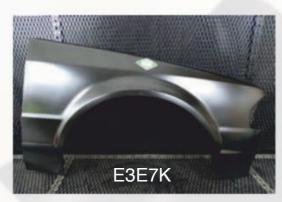








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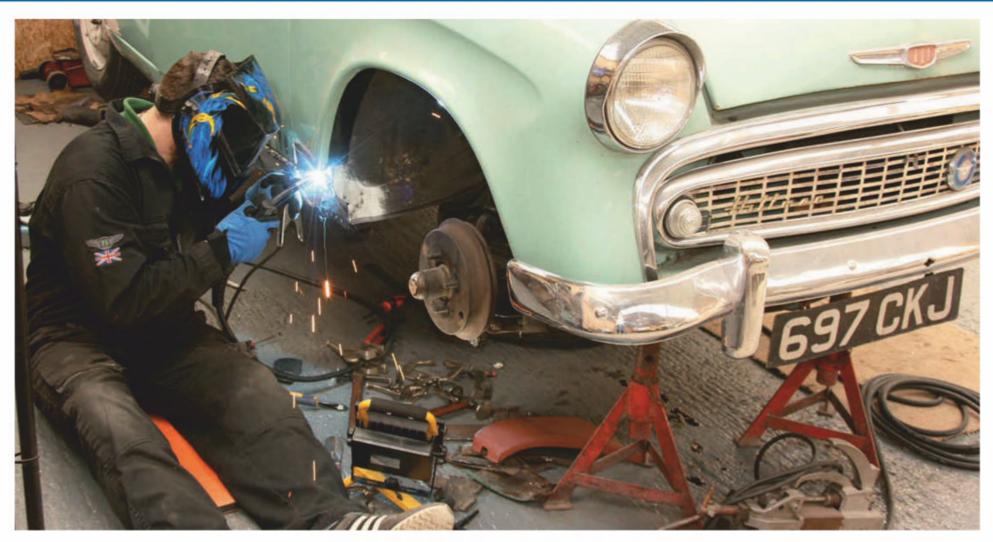












BODYWORK RESTORATION PART 5

Having learned how to shape metal and weld pieces together over the past few months, it's now time to start using those skills on an actual vehicle. WORDS AND PICTURES: PETER SIMPSON

o you know how a car is put together, how to cut out rust, how to shape some replacement sections and, following Simon's piece last month, you know how to use a MIG welder to join pieces together. Now, at last, we can move on to some actual car work. Don't forget to disconnect the battery and unplug the alternator first though – electric welding can cause damage to both...

MIND THE GAP!

Welding is a process which joins metal by melting it so that two or more pieces become one, with the welding rod helping the process along. However, and this is a common misconception, the rod does not stick metal together, rather its metal mixes and merges with the pieces of metal that are being joined. It therefore follows that all types of welding need somewhere for the welding rod's metal to go. With plug-welding this is straightforward – the weld plugs the hole. With lap welding the weld goes between the sheets so to speak and into the lap.

However, when you're inserting new metal into an existing panel in place of rust and want the join to be totally invisible, you need to provide a gap between the two panels for the weld to flow into. This needs to be as consistent as possible and about 1-2mm wide. As you can see in the photos, Andy – like most body restorers I've worked with – uses Intergrip welding clamps to secure flat pieces



Here's a fairly complex repair section Andy made for the front of the Minx's outer sill. The slightly conical-shaped piece goes under the front wing, forming a closing section, and though this is invisible with the wing in place, it's an important part of the overall structure. Getting stuff like this right is what distinguishes true restoration from repair.

of steel next to each other when there's access to both sides of the panel as these handy little tools hold the panel and repair section in exact alignment to each other and, provided of course that you've cut the edges straight, they also set the gap to a correct and consistent measurement.

Take lots of time and trouble here. Outer panel fit obviously affects the overall look of the vehicle and has to be spot on, but don't



As we explained in part one, spotwelding, though a common technique in vehicle manufacture, often isn't easy or practical to replicate during restoration, so plug-welding is used instead. It looks similar, though a plug-weld is not as strong so you need, typically, twice as many. The first part is to drill through the edge that is to be welded, as here.

forget that an out of line inside section will affect the fit of whatever is supposed to go on top of it. Then, once you are 100% happy, you can start fixing the section into place using a series of tack welds which you then join up to form a complete and continuous bead. You then grind down the bead – usually in two or three stages, starting with a grinder and ending with a small orbital sander or similar, and eventually two will become one.



And here is the repair section in place. As we are effectively letting new metal into what was originally one panel and the sill is part of the car's structure, the joint within the sill must be a strong continuous weld so that two pieces become one. There needs to be a slight (1-2mm) gap between edges though, for the weld to flow into.



This is a vital but often forgotten step. As you don't want to be doing this job again in ten years time - or less - it's absolutely vital that all the inner surfaces are properly and thoroughly primed/ rustproofed while you can reach them. Weld-through primers are available for use on edges that are going to be welded.



As Simon pointed out last time, it's absolutely essential that all surfaces to be welded are scrupulously clean and free of rust. Here Andy is giving the sill edge a final clean and tidy up. Note the safety gloves; Andy is also of course wearing proper eye protection. As you can see, the inner and central sill has already had significant restoration.



Final line up prior to welding. As the sill box-section will be closed once this panel is in Oplace, the top gap has to be set entirely by eye, and the repair section secured at the bottom and side. An important tip here - if you're serious about car restoration, it's pretty much impossible to own too many sets of welding clamps!

PLUGGING THE HOLE

As we explained in part one, spot welding is used extensively in original manufacture of bodyshells because it's quick and easy as a production line process. Access problems, however, limit its use in restoration. Plug welding is a good alternative way of joining two or more flat pieces on top of each other, and has the major plus point of looking pretty much the same as a spot weld once it's painted. However, while a plug weld is a perfectly satisfactory way of joining structurally important metal, an individual plug weld is not as strong as a single spot weld, and therefore to maintain the original integrity you need to make more of them. Opinions on how many more you need seem to vary. Some say you should double up and do two plug welds for one spot weld, others suggest a 50% uplift (ie three plug welds for two spot welds) is sufficient.

Anyway, the technique is simple enough – drill a hole about 5mm diameter through all the pieces to be joined apart from the bottom one. Then clamp them all together, not forgetting of course to thoroughly rustproof all the surfaces first as moisture loves to get into lap-type joints. You then fill the holes with weld, overlapping slightly at the end, and that's it. There is just one other consideration – safety!

SAFETY STUFF

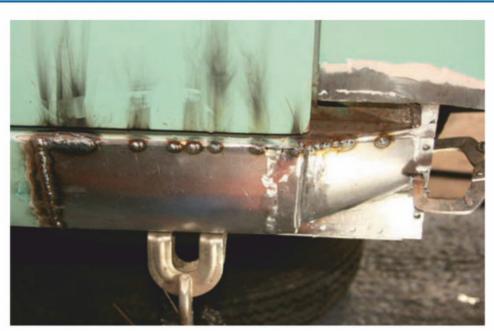
Welding, like most things in life, is perfectly safe if you're sensible and observe a few precautions, but can be dangerous if you're careless and/or blasé about what you're doing. In practice, however, it's not usually beginners who come unstuck, but often the slightly more experienced amateurs, people who've done it a few times before without incident and think they can cut a few corners.

Firstly, if you are new to all of this, please ensure there is someone else around, either in the workshop with you or within easy shouting distance in case of problems. Secondly, make sure anything remotely flammable is well away from the area in which you are working – heat travels a long way in any case, and it can only take a single spark landing where it shouldn't to cause a fire. I'd also drain the fuel tank but please, and this is very important, do not leave the cap off afterwards as that is bound to lead to highly inflammable petrol vapour entering the workshop atmosphere.

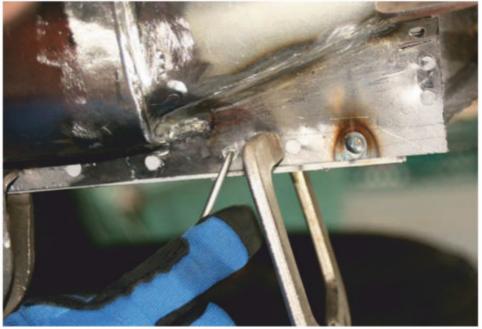
Wear decent quality gloves that are suitable for welding too; not rubber-based gloves that are designed for gardening as these can melt if hot sparks land on them. And finally, do make full and proper use of the welding mask. Yes, they take a bit of getting used to and at first you'll feel like you are working blind, but 'arc-eye' from looking at welding without protection is extremely painful; I know, I've had it. And while the risk of longterm eyesight damage is relatively small, it really isn't worth taking the risk.. CM



Now at last the welding can begin. Andy started by securing the curved join into the main sill with a series of tack welds (very short spots rather than beads), as this join will be very visible and spot-on alignment is therefore vital. He then added a series of tack welds along the top, again keeping an eye on position. As you can see, a little bit of pushing in was needed at the very end.



This is the repair section part-welded in place. Once he had tack-welded the top and left-hand edges, Andy joined the tacks to form a continuous weld; doing this in stages minimises the possibility of heat distortion. The plug-weld holes run right along the bottom edge, and once it's all painted they'll be absolutely indistinguishable from spot-welds.



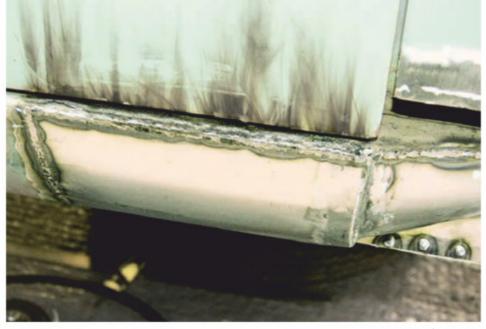
Remaking original joints – one plug weld down, about two J dozen to go! Before making the weld, it's a good idea to scratch the back piece which you will be welding on to in order to get better adhesion. Later on, we'll be putting the front wing repair section on top of this, so these plug welds will be ground flat.



1 Plug-welding the front of the section into position. For many people, practising away from the car before you start is as much about getting used to working through a mask as it is about the actual welding technique. Bear in mind too that while overalls intended for automotive work are designed to resist welding fallout, those intended for other industries may not!



Grinding down begins! Assuming your welding was properly continuous, and that you left the correct gap, you should be able to grind the outer surface completely smooth and, when you've finished, from the outside the original sill and repair section should be as one continuous piece of metal.



2 Getting there; by this point you should be able to see if there are any gaps which need attention; needless to say Andy's welding was spot-on first time. Any gaps you do find must be welded - this is all part of the car's structure and using filler would be little different from plugging rust holes in the sill with it.



13 As noted earlier, the plug welds in the sill closing section had to be flattened out in order that the wing bottom repair section could be fitted, along with a small closing section at the front that's designed to keep road muck out. To do this Andy used this small conical high-tensile drill-mounted file which can get right into the corners and ensure the panel is ground to be totally flat.



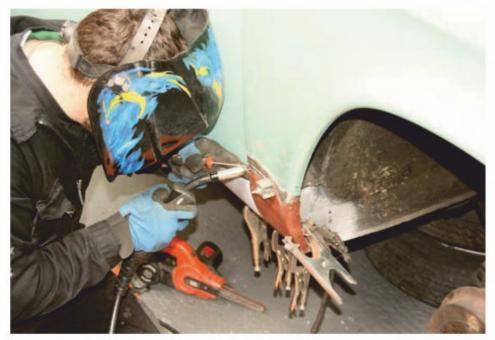
14 And here is the wing repair section clamped in place.
Intergrip welding clamps as used here are inexpensive –
around £20 for five – and very handy for fitting a section into a
panel because as well as ensuring the two pieces are in totally
correct alignment, they set the welding gap. You do, though, need
to have at least some access to both sides of the joint.



15 As this is an external panel, correct alignment and original panel gaps are crucial, and you can expect to spend a fair amount of time getting things like the wing-to-sill gap correct. Do also bear in mind though that in the 1950s and 1960s, some factory gaps could, by modern standards, be surprisingly inconsistent.



16 You can also expect a proprietary repair section to need a certain amount of fettling prior to fitting; this isn't because they aren't made properly, but again it's a reflection of inconsistent standards in the past. You'll also of course need to clean away the primer at the edge which is to be welded.



17 With the welding underway, see what I meant earlier about never having too many welding clamps?! Incidentally, the red oxide primer on sections like this is primarily there to prevent surface corrosion in storage; it's not intended to be smooth or consistent enough to paint over.

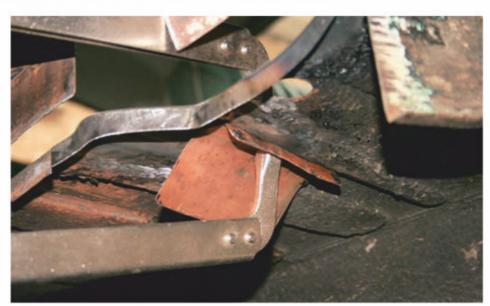


Here's a demonstration of just what is possible using the techniques we've been demonstrating over the past few months. This is a proper repair section for a corroded section of the driver's floor, complete with all the original strengthening pressings etc. As you can see, it's held in position from underneath using panel clamps – this is why you need access to both sides.

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9 And here is an exceptionally high-tech but massively useful addition to the restorer's tool kit which is a little-known but massive help when you have good access to both sides and want a perfect finish on both. It is nothing more than a small piece of copper sheet, 2-3mm thick or more, and can be formed by cutting and flattening an appropriately-sized piece of pipe.



20 And here it is in position. By Clamping the underside of the area that is being welded, you stop the underside of And here it is in position. By clamping it directly underneath the weld from spreading so that it is concentrated where it needs to be within the gap, thus making it easier to create a maximumstrength weld and reducing the amount of cleaning up needed. Once you've finished, unclamp the copper and remove it.



Do be very thorough when it comes to stripping out trim etc before working inside the car; things can get very hot when welding, heat travels a long way, and most classic trim is highly flammable. Watch out too for petrol lines and tanks; this may sound obvious, but every year a few cars burn out during welding.



2 Seen from underneath, the copper plate technique worked really well, and only a little localised cleaning up was required using a narrow band-sander before the repaired panel was primed, painted and rustproofed to match the rest of the floorpan. Incidentally, this repair was actually done before the sill.



On top, part-way through the grind-down. As you can see, the rest of the floor has plenty of surface corrosion, resulting from a long-term leaking windscreen rubber and consequently saturated sound-deadening underfelt underneath the floorpan's rubber mats. Fortunately, the repair seen here was the only one needed.



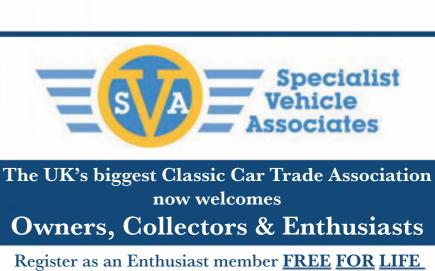
The finished section in place, ground down, and apart from being a different colour, looking exactly like it and the main floorpan have always been one. This is what true car restoration is all about!

Preparation and **Painting**

THANKS

Thanks to Andy Usher of Usher Vintage and Classic - 07963 704931, www.ushervintageandclassics.co.uk for demonstrating most of the techniques used in this series so far, and also for carrying out an exceptional restoration on my Hillman Minx. Andy is a first-class craftsman, a true perfectionist, and the car is absolutely stunning!





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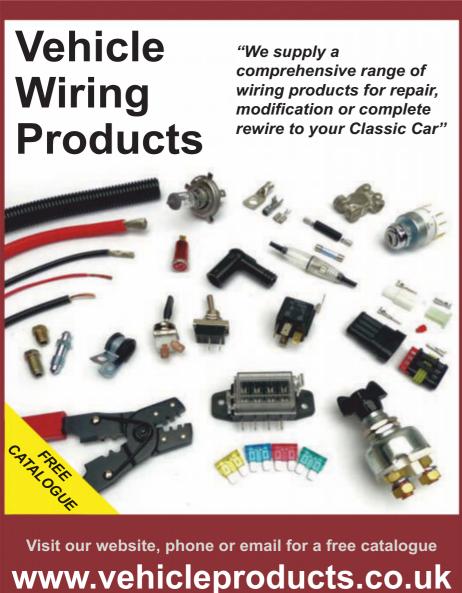
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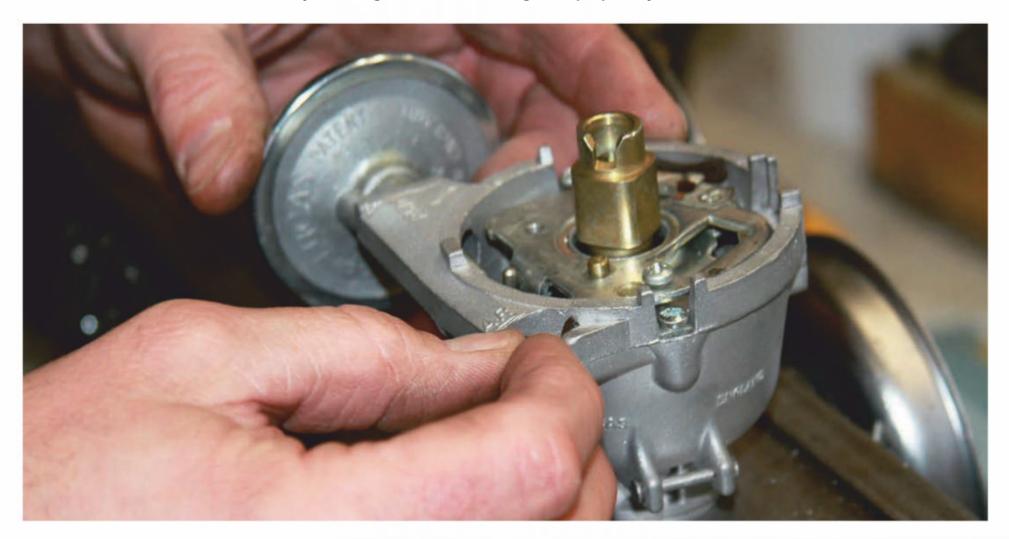
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THE ART OF THE SPARK

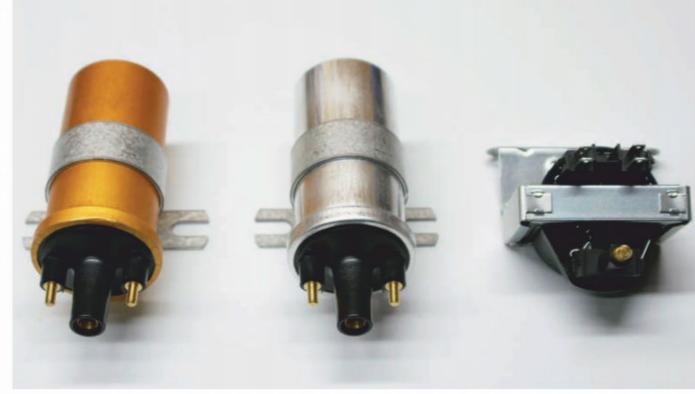
We visit H&H Ignition Solutions at Brierley Hill in the West Midlands and discover exactly what goes into making a top quality distributor.



&H Ignition Solutions was founded in 2004 by Lee Hull and his uncle, Phil. Both had worked for XL Components beforehand, an ignition factory on a massive scale that turned out thousands of distributors each week for the aftermarket in the late 1980s and 1990s. The units they were working on were simply for secondhand cars at the time (AC Delco for things like the Astra and Nova, Motorcraft for Ford OHV and OHC engines, Bosch and Lucas for CVH engines and so much of the BL stuff for example,) but many of those cars were just starting to edge into classic status.

By 2004, the classic market was booming and XL were neglecting it, putting only small volumes into the trade through businesses such as Lucas and Unipart along with a few much smaller service agents. Then a change of company ownership brought with it a change of direction, and Lee and Phil saw an opportunity to set up on their own. Spares for distributors were still readily available at the time and good quality, too. With their trade contacts plus going to shows to deal directly with the public, the new business took off.

'We still get a lot of reconditioning work,' says Lee, 'but it certainly dropped down a notch a few years ago after the Chinese components started arriving in the UK. The build quality of those units was



Coils need to be matched to the rest of the ignition system. These may be ballasted (as the gold one) or provide a full 12 volts (silver), or even dry and filled with resin rather than oil (on right). Crucially though, they need to have quality windings and insulation to be reliable in service.

often poor, but what else could you expect when you could buy a complete distributor for little more than the price of a distributor cap made in the UK or Europe? Fortunately people have since become aware of the perils of cheap reproduction units and the reconditioning side is once again booming.'

Now don't worry, because this is not

going to turn into a rant against Chinese imports and we recognise that everybody in the trade has to shop in the far east to some extent, but it is important to explain why a distributor fresh off the boat might cost as little as £30, but one from a UK specialist such as H&H can be upwards of £125. For something like a simple Lucas

unit, that is partly because H&H have to strip and rebuild it prior to sale – rotor arms that track to earth are one well-known issue, but H&H also check and correct problems with base plates, bodies, drive dogs, bushes, cams, cap clips and more.

'But faulty components or machining are only part of the problem,' says Lee. 'Just as important is the fact that all imported variants - Lucas 25D4, 45D4, 59DF etc tend to have the same internals as far as springs, weights and vacuum specs go, even though different engines and different carburettor specifications require a different amount of movement. Unfortunately the distributor that seems to have been chosen as the base spec was one specified for the Land Rover 2.25 petrol engine. This has an unusually wide movement arc, and while they can sometimes be timed up to run in other applications, this can cause engines to pink, pop or run poorly."

We'll see how they do it a little later, but companies such as H&H can build a distributor to the correct specification, whether for a modified or a standard engine, and bench test the finished article for advance, vacuum, dwell angles and all other vital parameters. They can also offer electronic conversions, starting with a magnetic switch that replaces the points and condenser for £65. The next step is an outright unit, usually the later 45D4 because the mechanical components on that are a better design, rebuilt to suit the intended application and sold together with a silver coil – prices for the fit-andforget package start at £205, depending on exact specification.

Talking of coils, this is another area



These are the major components of the newly reintroduced 22D6 distributor with tacho drive, primarily used on six-cylinder Triumphs. All except the top of the distributor body are made in the UK, and even the imported section is machined over here to take the new lower section.

where you get what you pay for as some ultra-cheap imports are very poorly made. H&H sell three types, which all cost about the same but are intended for different applications. The gold coil is ballasted and intended for use with points or the Ignitor system, while the silver coil has heavier windings and lower resistance and is needed for OE electronic ignitions and full electronic conversions. There is also a dry cell unit that uses resin rather than oil - this gives even more of a kick and can be mounted in any position.

Our picture sequence starting overleaf shows how H&H rebuild a typical Lucas distributor, but we should also make mention of a more unusual variant they have put back into production. This is the Lucas 22D6 unit with mechanical tacho drive, as used on Triumph TR5, TR6 and 2000/2500 saloons. Because the unit was unique to just a few engines and the original distributors were extremely rare, people used to find it almost impossible to replace one if it was lost or damaged.

Not any more, because H&H now build them in house (and so can also offer them as a replacement for the troublesome Delco distributors fitted to Triumph GT6 and Spitfire engines). They start off by taking a reproduction distributor body, use the top half only and then machine it to take a new lower body that is cast in Derbyshire and machined in-house. The spindle is machined in-house, then a specialist company in Birmingham add the helical gear for driving the tacho. The tacho drive comes from another UK specialist, and the blanking plate for the tacho drive cover is pressed and finished inhouse before being sent for electroplating. Who said you can't get anything manufactured in Britain today...? CM

H&H Ignition Solutions are at 32 Fens Pool Ave, Brierley Hill DY5 1QA. Their website is currently under construction, (make a note of the address: www.h-hignitionsolutions.co.uk), but you

can call them on 01384 261500.



And the finished article – a 22D6 distributor that is ready to provide long-term reliable service.



This was the unit we brought to H&H for examination, a Lucas 25D4 from a Midget. The numbers on it are 41270 (which are Lucas codes for its applications) and 34 70 (which is the week and year of its manufacture).



The first step is a visual check to make sure the unit can be reconditioned. Ours is generally sound and unbroken, though there's some minor damage where the securing clamp has been over-tightened in the past – not enough to cause issues, but repairable at £15 anyway.



With the distributor body passed as fit for reconditioning, Lee then checked that the vacuum advance was moving by pushing the baseplate. Ours is fine, but we don't know yet if the vacuum diaphragm has perished.



Next check was for wear in the spindle and its bush. Some slight movement is fine, but we have too much play between the spindle and its bush, and also between the cam and the spindle to which it is fixed.



The strip down can now begin in earnest. The LT leads, contacts and condenser will all be replaced as a matter of course, the cap clips too if they have lost their springiness. Other parts will be replated.



6 You can find wear on this pin which connects the two halves of the baseplate. Fortunately you can usually turn the pin with pliers so that an unworn portion is then acting on the upper baseplate.



Check too that the springs are undamaged and connected. Note the 11° stamped on this unit - that is the maximum amount of advance it will allow. Midget specs are for 10°-12°, not 19° as on the Land Rover.



Release the C-clip on the end of the vacuum advance, then the thumbwheel and ratchet strip. When reassembling, insert the ratchet strip before the thumbwheel or you will find it a tricky operation.



Don't lose the spring that sits on the actuation shaft. If the vacuum mechanism has seized, the tab on the distributor body alongside the thumbwheel can be broken if the adjuster has been forcibly wound out.



The oil seal on this distributor was so brittle that it broke into three pieces when we removed it. It was a salutary reminder to always replace such cheap and simple components if buying secondhand items.



Next the pin holding the drive dog on the end of the shaft is drifted out. Note that H&H have a jig for supporting the distributor body and shaft so they are not damaged when this is done.



With the pin securing the drive dog removed, the shaft can then be drifted out of the distributor body. Note again that the body is properly supported so that it does not get damaged during this process.



There is a screw in the top of the shaft holding the cam section to it. With this removed and the springs detached from their posts, the cam with its base plate and the bob weights can be separated from the spindle.



Under the accumulated grime on a vacuum unit will be a series of numbers. The 5-8 on this one relates to the spring while the 3 is the number of degrees it moves - one size does not fit all!



5 H&H always replace the vacuum advance diaphragm as this rubber component will be 40 or more years old. To access it, the old diaphragm unit has to be carefully cut open in the lathe...



16...before being cleaned in the blast cabinet. Then a new rubber diaphragm is fitted, a collar placed over the two halves of the unit and machine rolled firmly in place to clamp them together. Finally the reconditioned unit is vacuum tested to ensure it has a perfect seal.



17 Returning to the distributor body, this is the spindle bush that has to be drifted out so that it can be replaced. With that removed, the body is then blasted clean before the rebuild can begin.

The original spindle is cleaned up with emery paper in the lathe and checked for trueness. All of this labour goes some way to explaining why a rebuilt unit using points generally costs from £155, far more than a brand new one fresh off the boat from China.





9 After a light smear of grease has been applied to the plates, the cam is reattached to the spindle. H&H normally plate the original components, but to turn ours around in one day they have fitted a plated cam from their stock of spares.



The new bush is drifted in until it is It then has to be reamed to size so that the shaft is a sliding fit with minimal side play. Lee takes several passes with a hand reamer, adjusting only a fraction between each one until it is right.



◀ After the plastic cup washer and a shim have been refitted, the spindle assembly can then be pushed through the distributor body. It may have to come back out to remove excess up-and-down play by fitting different thickness shims.



2 You always want to reuse the original dog with its original shaft to ensure the holes line up, as positions can vary. It is the right way round when, held like this, the dog's teeth are offset to the left and the rotor arm alignment slot is facing you.



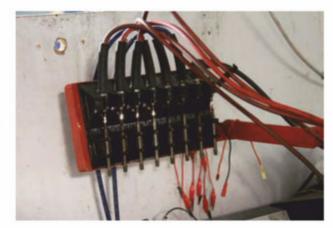
When reattaching the vacuum advance, adjust it initially so that the longest of these marks on the vacuum body (the longest one will be the central one) sits flush against the distributor body, then put the C-clip back on and squeeze it with pliers.



With the distributor reassembled, H&H ensure that the points on this four-cylinder unit open at exactly 90° intervals, and the amount of advance is tested at different RPM speeds. This is then compared to the original manufacturer specs.



The tests showed that at one point in the rev range, the advance on our unit was slightly out of spec. The two springs are not identical, the longer one being the secondary spring. Ours needed a minor tweak to bring it back into spec.



The final check was to make sure there were four nice, fat sparks. Electronic ignition can also be added to most reconditioned distributors at an additional cost of £65-£125, depending on application



7 And this is the finished article, ready for another five decades of service. This one has been rebuilt exactly to OE specs, but if you give H&H details of any modifications you've made to your engine, they can build one to suit that application.





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You can't have an AC Cobra. However, the replicas are strong, fast and entertaining, and have been around long enough to be considered classics in their own right. Report: lain Ayre

mitation is supposedly the sincerest form of flattery. Cobra lookalikes have now become a genre rather than a specific car, and the existence of many times more offspring and lookalikes than originals suggests that the originals were eminently worth copying, by and for people who couldn't afford the real thing.

The car that became the Cobra when it sniffed the automotive angel dust was the AC Ace, an exquisite and delicate gentleman's sports

car in the best of the British sporting tradition, ie. not very fast, and distinctly Italian in design. To be accurate, which is important in the Cobra world, the AC Cobra is an AC Ace with a bigger engine. The Ace was designed by John Tojeiro. He was not exactly Italian, but a Portuguese/British racing chassis and body designer. His designs reveal that he had admired many assorted Italian 1950s racing Barchettas and Etceterinis before creating the design that was bought by AC and emerged



This was seen at a kit car show in Los Angeles – a Cobra on a Beetle pan. I thought it was hilarious, but the blokes who built it got death threats from Cobra fundamentalists. Grow up, chaps.



This interior is 25 years old, but good quality leather in darker colours just looks better with age, up to a point. The cassette deck is perhaps the only giveaway to this one's build date.

as the Ace. Some of the lines of a Ferrari Barchetta by Touring reappear on the Ace, but better resolved and with less clutter.

Tojeiro's tubular ladder chassis for the Ace was innovative and light, with Fiat-style single transverse springs taking a substantial amount off the overall weight. The chassis was quite stiff and usefully simple. The body was superleggera (or superlight), a thin tracing of steel tubes supporting a lightweight aluminium skin with perfect proportions, genetic and

generic Italian-inspired formand-function genius condensed into the most beautiful ever 1950s light sports car. The reason the Cobra has pulled so many people into its world is its sculptural perfection, although few replicators or owners would think of it in that way – they just know they love it. Even when you stuff a monster engine in and add bulging steroid-injected wheelarch muscles, the car remains a beauty, and as with the E-Type, a coupé roof ices the cake even more deliciously.

BUYING GUIDE COBRA REPLICAS



It's just as well that the Ace was light, as its two-litre OHC straight six dated back to the First World War. This is a good engine, with a smooth 100bhp and quite an advanced design for 1918, but by 1955 the engine was looking a little geriatric and a replacement was overdue. Designing and engineering a new engine is always a risky business for a small company, so AC contracted with Bristol to supply a more powerful and modern ex-BMW 120bhp two-litre six. Bristol then decided to stop making car engines. It was too late for AC to go back to their own engine, so they flirted with the oversquare and revvy Ford Zephyr 2.6-litre straight six in Ruddspeed form, optionally with a Raymond Mays triple-Weber head and 170bhp.

It was maybe a better engine than the Bristol six, but it was not posh. And the lack of poshness in the engine bay was a big marketing problem to the gentlemen who bought ACs. However, the next thing that happened was Carroll Shelby, who had seen Aces during various American and European travels and racing adventures and had realised that fitting a very light European car with a strong V8 would create a top monster. He was turned down by Chevrolet, but Ford liked the idea, and so did AC.

Shelby had an Ace sent to his racing buddy Ed Hugus in



The Rover V8 still makes a good Cobra engine as it is light, reliable and not scary fast. Later bigger versions of the engine can be more temperamental. This tidy installation is in a Dax.

Pittsburgh to have the Ford V8 fitted to it. The car was shown on the Ford stand at the New York Motor Show, and the Cobra legend roared into life. Complete but empty AC Aces were shipped to the US, where they were fitted with 260ci (4.2-litre) thinwall V8 Ford engines weighing 500lbs, and new badges that said SHELBY (ac) COBRA. Shelby was always excellent at marketing Shelby!

The early Cobras were sublime in many ways, although the transverse leaf springs and narrow longitudinal drainpipe main chassis beams that had been perfect for 100bhp were somewhat overwhelmed by twice that much power. So of course the next step to legend status was to jam in big-block V8s! Those weighed around 650lbs and claimed 425bhp in sports/competition spec. The whole car weighs around 2400lbs and the engine can't go any further back, so you can see big-blocks would cause chassis flexing and handling issues.

Thicker chassis drainpipes and coil spring suspension helped, but the 427 Cobra is still an animal. I've driven a real 427 and several replicas, and I've studied one achieving some rapid laps at Lydden circuit in

Kent – driven very well, it was still tip-toed round the corners and then blatted down the straights when the back tyres had finally got enough grip. I don't like 427s, but that's just my flavour preference. I like cars that can play nice rather than just being pure nasty. If you enjoy nasty cars and hard work, then go big-block. Even the gear shift is industrial on a 427, because it comes from a truck gearbox. Double declutch and give it a good yank for the full Bullitt soundtrack.

Discussions about real Cobras are academic though, because the likes of you and I can't have one. You'd have to sell your house, and then you'd lose the Cobra in the resultant divorce. So why am I still talking as if you can buy a Cobra, then? Because you still can, as long as you rise above the boring Clarkson-worshippers' ignorant snobbery about kit cars. The kit car industry in its heyday manufactured thousands of kit Cobra replicas or lookalikes. A good few are still available new, and nearly all the kit Cobras ever made are still around – they have massively thick chassis and GRP bodies, so they just don't deteriorate. The bad news is that they are still quite expensive, for exactly those same reasons.

Yet even the cheapest is still worth having. A Pilgrim Sumo with a four-cylinder



The author's current Cobra project has a body sourced in California which was brought north to Canada on top of a campervan. The body came from the moulds of one of many bankrupt Cobra replica companies. You can certainly make a small fortune out of manufacturing a sport car such as a Cobra replica, but only if you start off with a big fortune.

>>



BUYING GUIDE COBRA REPLICAS

two-litre Pinto engine is as fast as a Cosworth Sierra Turbo because it's not lugging around four steel doors and electric windows. I once reviewed just such a bottom-budget gelcoatfinished Cortina Sumo. The owner was a factory worker with a family, and his eyes shone when he looked at and drove his pride and joy. My V8 snottiness evaporated. Any Cobra is better than no Cobra. Pilgrim Sumos were sold by the thousand, with a galvanised chassis that passed TÜV tests, and a well-made self-coloured body that didn't need paint.

The other Cobra replicas were sold by the dozens or hundreds rather than thousands, and they were not budget-built like Pilgrims. The norm was and is a simple braced square-tube ladder chassis, usually many times as strong as it needs to be and usually at least four times as thick as a production car chassis.

Good quality secondhand Cobra replicas are in the £25,000+ ballpark these days, although Pilgrims sometimes come up for less depending on engine and spec, and it's still very possible to find an abandoned Cobra project for a small percentage of its value. An irritating and expensive IVA test must be passed when a Cobra kit is completed, but if you're hands-on and spannered up, go for it. As with all classic car margues, joining the relevant club is an excellent idea – the



UK general Cobra replica club is www.cobraclub.com

Cobra replicas even within a single marque are all quite different, divergence across the different margues is dramatic, and of course some have evolved. They all look more or less like Cobras, usually 427s, they all have strong steel chassis and GRP bodywork, and that's about all they have in common. Try out examples of each manufacturer's offerings until you find your flavour, and importantly which ones physically fit you. Not all will. The following list is alphabetical, as there's no best Cobra, just the one you like best. CM



Two-litre Pinto four-cylinder may seem a naff idea, but the Pilgrim has the same engine as the scary RS2000 Escort, and is also 600lbs lighter with a lower centre of gravity. Oo-er Missus!

AK



AK make a strong, simple, ladderframe Cobra of good quality, but they've always been notable for being unusually nice people. AK Cobras use XJ running gear and American engines and they're based in Peterborough. The inner bodywork structure is completed in the mould and the bodies are left for a long cure, which always helps with quality and finish. Although doing well enough to have grown quite a lot, they still know their customers by name. It's also rumoured that all AK cars know their way to Le Mans as soon as they leave the factory.

www.aksportscars.co.uk

BUYING GUIDE COBRA REPLICAS



COBRETTI VIPER

Cobrettis use a very hefty chassis with standard Jaquar XJ6 suspension at full width, resulting in big bubble front arches, restricted tyre sizes yielding a perfectly weighted contact patch, and Jaquar quality ride and handling. They use Chevy V8 engines, as they're better and cheaper than Ford. I'm still sulking about having to sell my Cobretti. One pleasing detail with Cobrettis is their Viper name, won from Chrysler in court. Cobretti also introduced the name Predator, which was a Viper with a supercharged Chevy 350 V8. www.cobrettiviperv8.com



CRENDON REPLICAS



Crendon have a chassis resembling the original with big round 4in drainpipes for the main rails, with the 427's 16in spacing between the rails, but obviously a lot stronger as they're made out of kit car steel rather than production car steel – Crendon use 4in x 1/8in cold drawn seamless tube for the main chassis members, which gives the structure huge torsional rigidity. Suspension is also more custom and more Cobra-authentic than using the full Jag setup. My memory of a CR road test was noticeably light but responsive steering. Visually Crendons have always offered quite an authentic copy, with high quality and integrity.

www.Crendonreplicas.com

DAX TOJEIRO

Dax were the big boys of the premium Cobras, and are still on sale from the company's former Dutch importer. They started selling moulded Cobra bodies in 1968 through the old paper Exchange & Mart. Dax named their car the Tojeiro in tribute to Ace designer John Tojeiro. They also introduced their own camber compensation suspension - the kit car industry was often ahead of the game in engineering as well as styling. Dax made the big-block Cobra concept work as well as it can, and I've spent some entertaining moments sideways listening to tortured Yokos in Daxes. There was also a V12, but that's better left in a Jag.

www.JKSportscars.co.uk





GARDNER DOUGLAS



Engineering-driven and advanced, Gardner Douglas in Grantham build a number of cars, including the GDMk3 as a factory built car ready to drive away, or supplied in component form for self assembly featuring an interesting backbone chassis with effectively a monocoque GRP body on top, which is rubber-mounted, detachable and has featherweight anti-crush alloy floors. The concept is similar to Lotus Elans or TVRs, although execution is much stronger and torsionally stiffer. Developed through a lot of racing experience, they are probably the most technically advanced of the Cobras. They've used Toyota V8 engines, but lightweight aluminium Chevrolet LS engines are now standard. • www.gdcars.com

HAWK

Gerry Hawkridge is a massive Cobra enthusiast, and has made Ace replicas based on MG rolling gear and available with Zephyr Six engines, spiritually authentic to the AC Ace apart from the cost. He also makes a replica of 29PH, a famous 289 racer – Gerry was allowed to take moulds off the car on the basis that he would fix any damage the real car sustained from then on. There's a 289 FIA replica, a GRP 427, and Hawk also imported the 100% accurate Kirkham aluminium-bodied 427s with new-casting side-oiler engines made in Poland, which Shelby was selling as full-on continuation Shelby Cobras with CSX numbers.

www.HawkCars.co.uk



PILGRIM SUMO



In 1988, you could build a Cortina-based Pilgrim Sumo for £4000. Everybody told proprietor Den Tanner he was mad, nobody wants a Cortina Cobra. He was right, they were wrong. He overshot by adding door handles, an idea derided and soon dropped. Part of the low Pilgrim price was achieved by a cheap and light chassis, although it was still galvanised and still passed TÜV strength tests. Something Den understood, unlike many, was that it's just as easy to make perfect bodies as rough bodies, with fully sorted moulds. Pilgrim's bodywork was so good that it didn't even need painting: file off the moulding flash lines, buff up the gelcoat and Sumos looked painted. Donors have been Cortina, Sierra, Granada and Jaguar. Although bereft of its colourful founder, Pilgrim is still going strong with kits and fully built factory cars, The Essential Buyer's Guid

currently with Chevrolet V8 power.

www.Pilgrim-motorsports.co.uk



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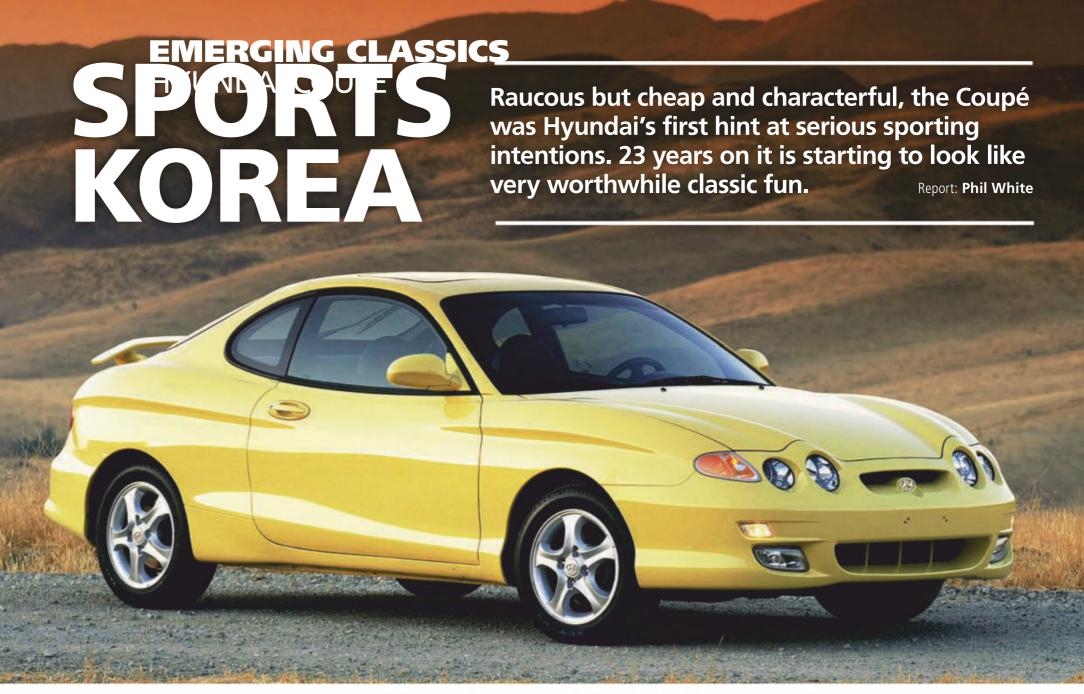
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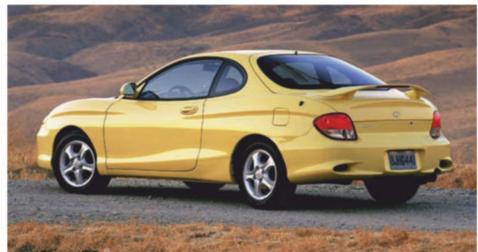
ew sports cars have less pedigree than the Hyundai Coupé. The South Korean company's automotive division had been churning out undistinguished-yet-competent automobiles since its 1967 birth, starting with a licenced version of Ford's Mk2 Cortina. Its entry into the UK market in 1982 was a four-door, rear-wheel drive hatchback conceived by a former managing director of Austin Morris. The Pony managed to be guite remarkably unexceptional, despite styling that sprang from the pen of Giorgetto Giugiaro.

Six years later Hyundai produced a car that, in name at least, had sporting ambitions. The S Coupé was based on the current Pony, which by then had become a front-wheel drive vehicle with origami bodywork

and a distinctly utilitarian air. A low-slung, two-door format and a 1.5-litre engine were combined with styling that only a mother could get excited about to create a sports coupé that was at best lukewarm.

The S Coupé was thankfully the end of an era for Hyundai. In 1990 it realised that creating products to appeal to customers outside Korea required it to take soundings in those markets. That year it built an Engineering and Design Centre in Irvine, California. This facility was tasked with creating products for both the American and wider global markets. It also made concept vehicles.

The first of these took the Detroit Motor Show by storm in 1992. The HCD-1 (Hyundai California Design) was a very, very good-looking sports car



In 1999, the Hyundai Coupé was facelifted. The most obvious tell-tale are the four headlights, but the tail was revised too.

indeed. It was extremely low, with a targa roof and a rear window which disappeared to give the look of a speedster. Elements of its design – such as the curvy Coke-bottle shape and strakes over each wheelarch – were to reappear on the Coupé when it arrived four years later in 1996. The stolid, South Korean car maker had found a visual language that spoke to the world and the Coupé went on sale globally.

As a production car the Coupé is an attractive machine, although the lightness of HCD-1 is lost in its side profile. Like many cars it was obviously conceived with large wheels (17in diameter in this case) that didn't make it to the road version – the Coupé has 15 or

16in alloys, depending upon which model. But the overall lines are a collection of very well-balanced curves, and the car still looks relatively fresh as it approaches its quarter-century.

Contemporary motoring press lauded the Coupé's looks, but had little praise for a distinctly unrefined engine. Two versions of Hyundai's workaday Beta four-cylinder, 16-valve petrol motor appear in UK-spec cars, in 1.6 and 2.0-litre guise. The former develops 110bhp at 5800rpm and 106lb.ft of torque at 4500rpm, while the latter produces 137bhp at 6000rpm and 133lb.ft at 4800rpm. These engines need to be revved to perform. If you do gun them, the 1.6-litre car will amble to 60mph in 10.8 seconds, then



The Hyundai Coupé (not to be confused with the earlier Ponybased S Coupé) started as a concept vehicle designed in California.

EMERGING CLASSICS HYUNDAI COUPÉ





Automatic options were available on the Coupé, but not surprisingly this did blunt performance.

on to a 120mph maximum. The 2.0-litre version gets to 60 in 8.3 seconds, with a 131mph terminal velocity. At least these are the figures for the manual Coupé – slower automatic alternatives were available.

Performance is about what you would expect from a 1250kg car of the period, packing these sizes of engine. What road testers took issue with at the time was the racket produced from under the bonnet. Lack of refinement was notable. However, what was also remarkable was how much more affordable the Hyundai Coupé was than its competition. It did the same sort of job as a Ford Probe or Nissan 200SX, but for much less outlay. That money bought you a stylish, well-assembled machine. Admittedly the interior was of largely uninspiring plastics, but in that era, unless your car was German it was unlikely to have a much nicer office.

Time, they say, changes everything. 23 years on from the Coupé's launch its combination of decent build quality and relative unsophistication are the basic ingredients of a potential classic. Modern cars are so insulated by noise, vibration and harshness suppression that the Coupé now seems guite raw and exciting to pilot. It also enjoys nice, neutral handling, plenty of steering feedback and incisive turn-in.

For modern motorists this is a fun car to drive, in an age when fun is in ever-shorter supply. A Coupé, unless you absolutely thrash it, will return mpg figures in the early to mid 30s which, along with the reliability that comes from good basic manufacturing processes and mechanical simplicity, makes this car a worthwhile prospect for either part-time fun or everyday motoring. The Coupé's practicality is further underlined by a cabin with four proper seats. Admittedly the rear bench is for children only, but it splits and folds forwards to allow for a decent boot space accessed by a full hatch.

Production of the initial Coupé lasted only three years. In 1999 the car received a facelift, which literally consisted of a nose job to give it quad headlamps, and rear end revisions to the lamps and bumper. The refreshed car

rumbled on until 2001. It is this brief period in motoring history which concerns us here.

Although the Coupé made fairly healthy sales in the UK, it has not survived its doldrum period well as ultra-low value consigned most cars to the scrapheap. It is now an extremely rare car. Of course, this only increases its cachet as an emerging classic. But while a Hyundai Coupé is something worth finding and acquiring, you will have to look hard and search patiently. As I write this, it seems that only one example is accessible via the usual online sales portals in the UK.

There is therefore not only a compelling argument for seeking out a Coupé, but a healthy imperative to hunt down one of the rarer and more interesting variants. In the UK this means either the F2 or F2 Evolution models. These commemorate Hyundai's entirely sensible decision to become involved in the F2 World Rally championships – an action that established it as a manufacturer with serious sports ambition, of which the ultimate expression is the current, utterly brilliant i-30N super hatch. The F2 involved entirely cosmetic upgrades such as a front spoiler, a mesh front grille, attractive Team Dynamics 16in alloy wheels and some interior jewellery. Buyers of the first 500 cars also received an alloy-bound book of artsy images, signed by Hyundai works driver Kenneth Eriksson.

The F2 Evolution went further, being developed by McLaren legend Peter Stevens and completed by Hyundai's motorsport division in the UK. It featured exterior tweaks including a downforce-inducing rear spoiler and even more attractive 16in wheels, upgrades to the cabin and a package of uprated induction, camshaft and exhaust claimed to add 17bhp to the power output.

Due to the lack of cars for sale at any one time, values are difficult to ascribe to the Hyundai Coupé. As a guideline a reasonable two-litre Si or SE model should command a price of £700 or more, but for the holy grail of a well-maintained, low-mileage F2 or F2 Evolution, expect to part with at least £5000. While this might sound quite a lot for an elderly Korean car, prices will only climb in forthcoming years as Hyundai's continuing motorsport success increases the cachet at this formative point in its story. Apart from being an enjoyable and trouble-free machine to own and drive, the Coupé is already ultra-rare. It's where Hyundai's pedigree begins.



The Coupé has a distinctive and attractive profile, but is also a very practical and well-built car.



THE BOND EQUIPES



This is the story of how a remarkable coincidence of aspiration, timing, good design and sheer luck cemented a relationship between Triumph and Sharp's Commercials in Lancashire to create the Bond family of Equipes. WORDS AND PICTURES: SIMON GOLDSWORTHY

awrence 'Lawrie' Bond was an engineer by trade. He set up his own engineering workshop in Blackpool during WW2, and by the end of the decade had designed and built two 500cc racers, the 'Doodlebug' Bond Special and the Type C Bond. He also designed the first Bond Minicar three-wheeler powered by a 3.25bhp 125cc Villiers motorbike engine, and arranged to have it built by Sharp's Commercials in nearby Preston.

Before long, Sharp's had bought the rights to the Bond Minicar while Bond himself concentrated on a number of two-wheeled vehicles. In 1956 he set up Lawrence Bond Cars Limited, and one of his first tasks was to design a small sports car for Berkley Cars Ltd, a company set up by Berkeley

Coachwork Ltd to supplement their flagging caravan manufacturing business. Other projects followed, including micro and racing cars, but it was in the early 1960s that Sharp's Commercials, who had continued to build and develop the Minicar concept, found that social and economic changes were making this austerity range increasingly obsolete.

By now the Minicar was up to its MkG designation, a version launched in 1961 and powered by a 246cc Villiers engine. Though three-wheelers enjoyed preferential rates of purchase tax and road fund licence compared to four-wheelers, they were already facing stiff competition from new small cars such as the BMC Mini when the financial advantage was eroded by reductions in purchase tax



The Bond Equipe started off with the Spitfire's 1147cc engine housed in a smart 2+2 body, but the rear seats were very cramped.

rates from November 1962. The Minicar would struggle on until 1966, when it was replaced by the all-new and far more powerful (it had a Hillman Imp engine in the back!) but

still three-wheeled Bond 875. For various reasons outside the scope of this feature the Bond 875 never reached its full potential, but it can't have helped that development and

production was delayed while Sharp's concentrated on another project – as early as the start of 1962 they had decided to expand their range and build a full-size sporting four seater/ four-wheeler. Lawrie Bond was commissioned to style it, and the Bond Equipe was the result.

The cost of developing a new car from scratch is, and always has been, ruinously expensive. That is often true even for the biggest of car makers (think Imp again!) and that's one reason why most 'all new' models carry over rather more of the old model than manufacturers like to admit. More often than not it is the mechanical package that gets carried over with perhaps just the odd tweak or two, while the body undergoes a more dramatic makeover to reflect the changing fads and fashions of the day.

So how did a small manufacturer such as Sharp's Commercials create the Equipe in a market that is skewed towards high volumes and massive investment? Like most similar operators, they found the best way forward was to let somebody else do the developing for them! The only way they could afford to turn this dream into a reality was to make the body out of glassfibre and to buy in the running gear, and with its separate



No opening bootlid on the first Equipes, and the rear window made it something of a greenhouse.

chassis rather than monocoque construction, Triumph's Herald was the only viable donor in town. In fact, Sharp's Commercials secured an unusual and extremely favourable deal with Standard-Triumph. Basically they bought in Triumph's Herald chassis and Spitfire running gear, clothed it with their own fibreglass body and interior trim, then sold the resulting coupés through Standard-Triumph's worldwide network of dealers.

They got away with this close and in some respects rather one-sided agreement with Standard-Triumph because the proposed coupé did not compete directly with any of the Triumph cars (the Herald Coupé was a slow-seller and destined to be dropped from 1964), and in many ways it suited Triumph to have something extra on display to help pull potential punters into the showroom. Sharp's cause might well have been helped too by the fact that their parent company were Loxhams Garages, who were major Triumph distributors in the northwest.

Mechanically, Sharp's were able to take something of a pick-and-mix approach to the Triumph parts bins. So, for example, they got the Herald's wide chassis to carry a 2+2 body, but the Spitfire's engine and brakes to give it a more sporty edge. The Spitfire engine was of course itself merely a version of the Herald's 1147cc

motor, but with power boosted from 39bhp (51bhp for the Herald 12/50) to no fewer than 63 horses, it gave the Equipe a respectable turn of speed to match its fastback styling.

That styling aped the
Triumphs of the day by having
a one-piece front end which
hinged forwards for unrivalled
access to the engine bay. Behind
this sat a Herald bulkhead,
windscreen, floorpan and doors
which blended seamlessly into
a sharply-raked fastback tail
culminating in a pair of slightly
rounded but still distinctly
Herald-esque rear fins. The
chassis was slightly shortened

at the rear but the

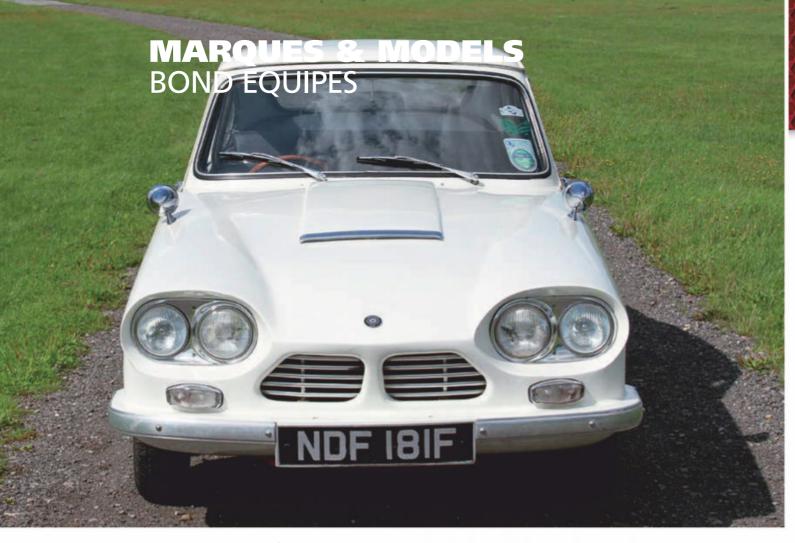
suspension was pure
Herald, although the
rear spring had to
be reset to suit the
Equipe's lighter
back end.

The new car was officially launched at the Earls Court Motor

Show in October 1963, just a year after Triumph's own Spitfire had first seen the light of day. The marketing genius and sheer good luck that had enabled Bond Cars Ltd (as it was soon renamed) to persuade Triumph to sell and service the Equipe through their own dealer network afforded the tiny Preston company a vast and world-wide reach that was out of all proportion to the small numbers of cars produced – just 451 of the original GT were built between October 1963 and 1964, followed by an additional 2505 examples of its successor, the GT4S (4S for Four Seater the original was retrospectively



The interior was clearly Herald based, but better specified with gauges taken from the Spitfire plus stylish Microcell Contour 6 bucket seats. The cars originally even had a woodrim Les Leston wheel.



The GT4S was restyled at the front with a highly distinctive quad lamp headlight arrangement...

called the GT 2+2).

That GT4S was an attempt to answer some of the criticisms of the initial offering. One of these was the almost total lack of rear headroom for anyone other than children, so the roof was raised by a couple of inches at the back. This gave the rear screen a slightly steeper slope, before a sharp turn sent the body on back to a new Kamm tail, complete with opening bootlid - GT owners had to access their luggage from inside the car because there was no external opening. Also included in the re-design was a far more stylised nose with twin headlamps built into oval recesses for a love-it-or-hate-it face, one that had room for potential use of the Vitesse sixcylinder engine designed in.

In February 1967 the GT4S became the GT4S 1300, mirroring the Spitfire's engine growth to 1296cc and 75bhp. And Bond was not finished yet because in 1967 the GT4S was indeed joined by an Equipe 2-litre GT variant, although rather than being a more powerful version of the existing model, this housed Triumph Vitesse running gear in an allnew coupé body. In comparison to the GT's curves, the new body was rather plain and uninspiring, but it did echo the styling trends of the day. The GT4S continued in production alongside the Vitesse-based newcomer until 1970, and as the 1300GT just made it through the takeover of Bond

by three-wheeler and fibreglass rival Reliant announced in February 1969.

Whereas Bond had to watch carefully every ounce they added to their three-wheelers to keep them under the 8cwt limit to qualify for tax and licencing concessions, there were no such constraints for the bigger cars and the Equipe GT was not a lightweight – at 1716lb it was far closer to the Herald's 1771lb than the Spitfire's 1589lb. In some ways this is an inevitable result of the bigger chassis and body, but it is also true that quality fibreglass is far from the lightweight material we often presume, especially if it is made thick and strong.

That description does seem

to sum up the Bond well. The occasional star crack aside, there is generally little indication of the material used for the body when you climb into an Equipe 2+2 or GT4S, thanks in no small measure to the steel Herald doors. These are heavy enough to rattle the B-posts if you slam them, but in fairness the same thing is true of the Herald itself.

The seats themselves are thin but nicely shaped buckets, and the body seems wider on the inside than its narrow exterior would suggest. It does force a rather unusual (but typically Triumph) driving position on you though, with feet over to the right and wheel towards the left - it sounds more uncomfortable than it is in reality.

Ahead of you is a wooden dash that looks pure Herald, until you notice the rev counter alongside the speedo, plus ancillary gauges the Herald did without. The switch gear layout is from the Herald 1200. The performance is far more peppy than the Herald though, contemporary testing crediting the Bond GT with 0-50mph and 0-60mph times of 12.3 and 17.6 seconds respectively, while even the beefed up Herald 12/50 took 15.2 and 25.2 seconds for the same two sprints.

Outright performance aside though, there is much less in it. The Bond enjoys the same great turning circle as the Herald, the same precise yet light steering and the same great gear change (including incidentally the same propensity to graze your knuckles on the radio when selecting first!). It also has the same tendency to jack up the rear wheel if you lift off the throttle during hard cornering that so troubled road testers pushing a car to its limit on track, but which in reality is rarely a problem on the road. But if the Bond GT feels like a Herald to drive, there is no disgrace in that as the Herald was one of the nicest cars of the era to drive. If you are going to take your inspiration from elsewhere, you may as well take it from one of the best.

As for the 2-Litre, this time Bond ditched the Herald's upright screen in favour of a



...while the back was revised too with a Kamm tail and a steeper slope to increase rear headroom.

MARQUES & MODELS BOND EQUIPES



more angled window and the door skins were bespoke, so the car was more expensive to build but the design had perhaps a more unified look than the GT4S which continued to be sold alongside it. With a 1998cc six pot engine producing 95bhp and Vitesse running gear, the 2-litre was obviously a faster car. In fact it could crack 100mph, and dispatched the 0-60mph sprint in just 11.5 seconds.

The 2-Litre Equipe proved a popular combination of style and performance, quickly pushing the older design somewhat into the shade. However, that extra performance soon focused people's attention on Triumph's less-than-perfect design of rear suspension. Fortunately, Bond were able to incorporate the improved Vitesse MkII rear suspension design into their own MkII launched in October 1968. At the same time they introduced a convertible version, which proved popular enough



to secure half of all Equipe MkII sales. Ultimate numbers were low however, not least because at £1305 the drop-top Bond cost £284 more than the equivalent Vitesse convertible.

There were thoughts of turning the GT4S into a convertible in an attempt to



The 2-Litre was based on styling proposals by Trevor Fiore, but comprehensively developed by Bond's Alan Pounder.

reverse its declining sales, but they were overtaken by developments when Reliant took over Bond Cars Limited in early 1969 and promptly put a stop to all Equipe development. The story of why Reliant took

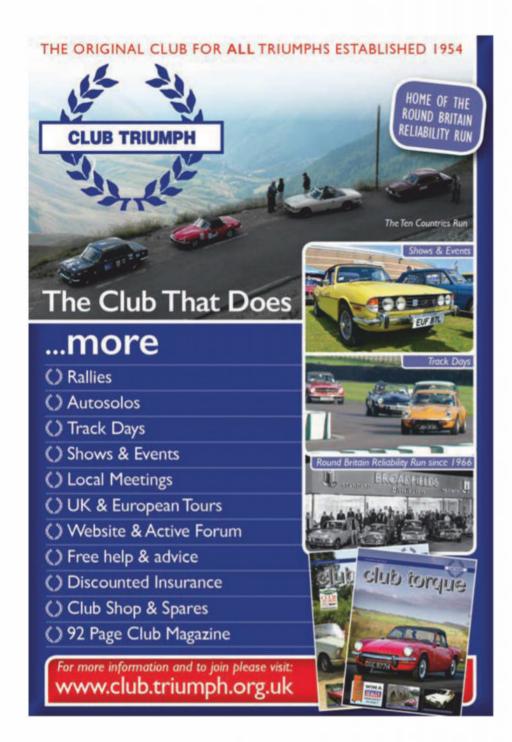
over their main opposition in the three-wheeled marketplace is complicated and multifaceted, but there is no doubt that Bond's close relationship with Standard-Triumph was one of the major attractions.

In fact, Reliant set about designing their own successor to the Equipe, using Triumph running gear and positioned between the three-wheeled Reliant Regal and the larger Scimitar, in the hope of continuing and expanding the arrangement, but this never progressed beyond the prototype stage. In part that was because of the merger between Leyland and BMC in 1968, bringing other marques and models into the dealership network that squeezed out the Bonds. The last examples were assembled in August 1970 and sold through auction because of the dubious build quality, a sad end for a great project.





The convertible was only ever available in MkII guise, and this proved to be a very popular choice.





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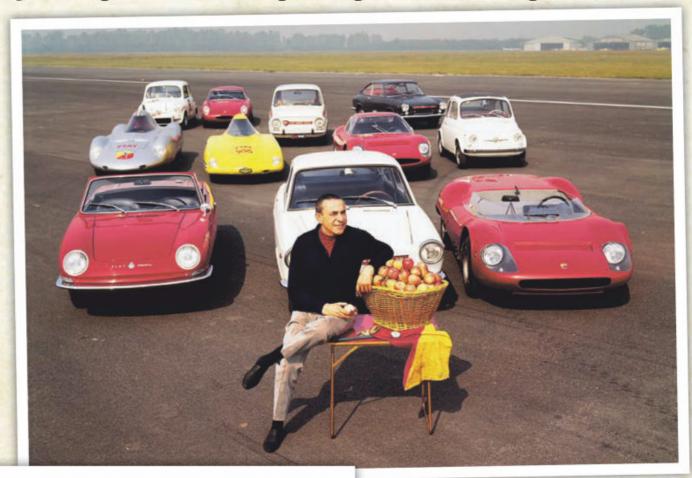
PRESS PICTURES A-Z

Join us on a trip down memory lane with these evocative and atmospheric press photographs from car manufacturers through the ages. We'll be working our way through the alphabet over the coming issues, but are starting - naturally enough! - at the beginning with A through to D.

ABARTH

This image was rereleased at the start of 2019 as part of

the celebrations for Abarth's 70th anniversary, showing Carlo Abarth with some of his legendary creations from the marque's golden era. Abarth & Co was founded by Carlo and racing driver Guido Scagliarini on 31st March 1949 in Bologna, northern Italy. Carlo's astrological sign, Scorpio, was chosen as the new company logo and the legend of the scorpion was born. Carlo Abarth died on 24th October 1979, by which time Abarth had become Fiat's racing department. In 2008 Abarth was relaunched to offer a range of competition cars, road-going halo models and tuning kits.



-

AUDI

Manufacturers love to borrow some of the glamour of flight in their press pictures. Often the cars are parked in the most unlikely of positions to stage the desired setting, such as this one with Audi's 80 estate of 1992 vintage. The original Audi 80 was based on the DKW F102, but by the time the final iteration arrived in 1992 it was based on VW's B3 platform. The Audi 80 badge took a break from 1996, to be replaced by Audi's A4. We're no experts, but we'd hazard a guess at identifying the chopper as a Robinson R22. Are we right or wrong?

AUSTIN

With the recent news that all but the last vestiges of the Longbridge factory are soon to be redeveloped, this shot from the 1930s showing a hive of activity on the finishing lines is especially poignant. We are once again slightly outside our comfort zone, but we'd place it in either 1937 or 1938, when the Austin Ten gained streamlining and six side windows, but before the redesign by Dick Burzi for 1940 that lasted until 1947, when it replaced by the all-new A40 Devon and Dorset.





PRESS PICTURES A-Z

■ BEDFORD

OK, we know this is a classic bus and not a classic car, but we have a soft spot for the Bedford OB and this is

such an atmospheric shot of a tour bus plying its trade along an unpaved road that we felt it would be acceptable to squeeze it in. This image was released by Vauxhall on 16th August 2009 as part of its celebrations for the OB model's 70th anniversary. No fewer than 12,766 examples of the OB had been built by the time production ended in 1951. It generally had seating for 29, and the body was developed in cooperation with Duple.

V BRM

This wonderful shot from Michael Cooper shows Jackie Stewart on the edge in a BRM P261. British Racing Motors, from their base in the Lincolnshire market town of Bourne, introduced the P261 in 1964 with drivers Graham Hill and Richie Ginther giving them their racing debut at the Monaco GP in May – Hill won and Ginther came second! Jackie Stewart joined Graham Hill at BRM for 1965, and while the V8 P261 never won a World Championship crown for BRM, in a lengthy career that stretched into 1968 it scored more F1 Championship points for the marque than any other model.



▲ BMW

It may look like a comic parade of German stereotypes, but this press shot of a glorious 02 saloon was released by BMW in 2006. Taken in Krün-Wallgau in the Bavarian Alps, that would explain the traditional costumes, though we do wonder if the driver plans on wearing his hat in the car!



We're heading back in time here as Buick's chief engineer Walter L Marr (left) and Thomas D Buick, son of founder David Dunbar Buick, are pictured in the first Flint-made Buick (minus bodywork) as it ended a successful Flint-Detroit round trip in July 1904. This Buick Model B was to be the company's first automotive offering, introduced with more bodywork (but only slightly more!) in 1905. Buick continued to produce cars in Flint until June 1999, when the last assembly plant in the city was closed. At the height of the 1980s, Buick had employed 28,000 people in Flint at what was dubbed Buick City, and no fewer than 77,000 workers in the Flint area in the late 1970s.



ARCHIVES PRESS PICTURES A-Z

CADILLAC

We've got a very definite USA feel to our page of automotive Cs this issue,

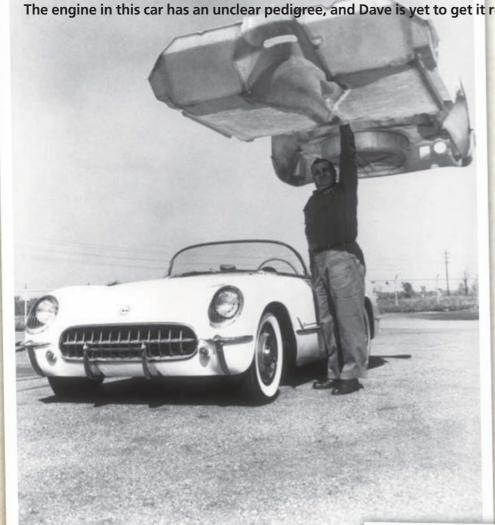
starting with a 1950s Cadillac that was futuristic even by that company's outrageous standards of the time. Pictured is the Cyclone concept car built in 1959. Designed by the legendary Harley Earl, the Cyclone featured a very modern feature in the shape of a radar-operated collision avoidance system - the sensors were in the front nose cones. Earl has the dubious honour of being credited with implementing the concept of planned obsolescence and annual model changes to help stimulate sales.



▼ CHEVROLET

The lines might look familiar, even if the details don't – this was the Chevrolet Chevette, available in the US market from 1976 to 1987. At the time of its launch, this was the smallest Chevrolet ever offered. It was also incredibly cheap, reliable The engine in this car has an unclear pedigree, and Dave is yet to get it runnanges from the last of the painfully slow in comparison to most of its rivals. Engine options were 1.4 and 1.6 straight

four petrol, plus an even more lethargic diesel option.



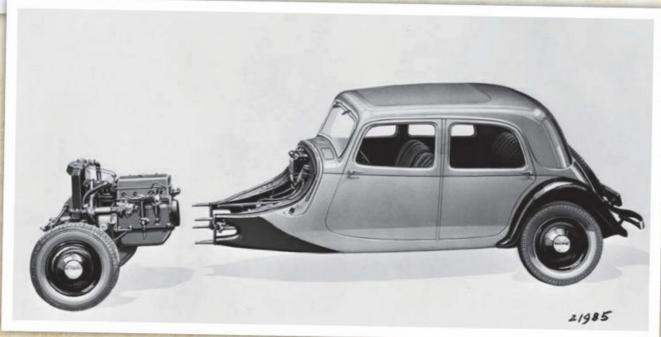


V CITROËN

This drawing of Citroën's revolutionary Traction Avant of 1934 is keen to emphasise what was quite a radical construction for the period, with front wheel drive and a monocoque shell for the cabin. Add rack and pinion steering plus independent suspension to the mix and you start to realise why production lasted all the way through to 1957.

CORVETTE

General Motors were obviously keen to extol the lightweight virtues of fibreglass construction in this publicity shot for the first generation of the car that became known as 'America's Sports Car.' The Corvette had been designed as a show car, but was put into production in 1953 – and is still with us today in eighth generation mid-engined form, making it the most successful 'show car' ever! The C1 lasted until the C2 Stingray of 1963, and was produced at Flint in Michigan as well as at St. Louis in Missouri.



ARCHIVES PRESS PICTURES A-Z



■ DODGE

We are back in the USA once again with the first of our Ds and this Dodge

police car. We believe that it is a 1957 model year Coronet. Being a police car, it is a safe bet that this is the D-501 model fitted with a 354 cu in (5.8-litre) hemi-head V8. In civilian trim that was good for 340bhp! The Coronet name had a complicated history with Dodge overall, lasting through seven generations from 1949-1976, plus an eighth generation in the 1980s for Colombia that was merely a rebadged Dodge Diplomat. In that time it was sometimes the top model in Dodge's line-up and sometimes the lowest, but it was never cooler that as this cop car.



Twin fuel tanks with one filler on each side allow the book

DAEWOO

We bet you weren't expecting a Daewoo to creep into our alphabet, but there is plenty of time in future issues for the Daimlers, Dafs and Datsuns. The Daewoo Nexia arrived in the UK in 1995. It was a revamped and outdated Vauxhall/Opel whose USP was that it was sold with three years free servicing. This was revolutionary stuff in the 1990s and turned the new car market on its head, even if it didn't work out for Daewoo - they were ultimately bought by GM in 2002.

DKW

We'll finish this issue's trip down memory lane in Germany with the DKW Sonderklasse 3=6 of 1957. This is the Luxus Coupé with its hardtop and wraparound rear screen. The engine is a three-cylinder two-stroke unit of 900cc producing 34bhp. DKW had lost the drawings to a new threecylinder unit to the Russians in 1945, so had previously had to rely on an old two-cylinder design for their similar Meisterklasse model of 1950-54.



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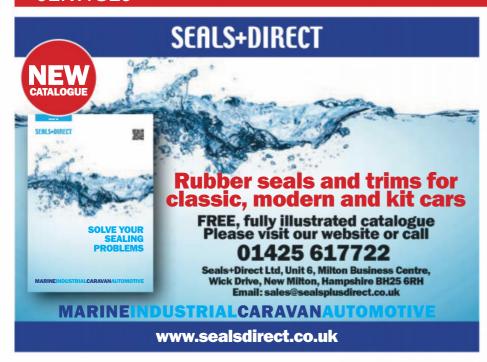
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1963, £58,750. Extremely rare, total body restoration on rust free vehicle. Full photographic rebuild, monumental paperwork, believed the only one in UK, sensational condition, original mechanics, 3 owners only and a nice history. Please call 07916 797613.

FERRARI

250 GTO REPLICA TRIBUTE MX250



1992, 71,350, £10,500. Based on Eunos 1.6 MX5. Totally reliable, needs nothing, immaculate. Licence revoked (poor eyesight), in SORN. You only have to see this car, updated brakes shocks by Gaz. Please call 01276 23078, Surrey.

FORD

CAPRI



1981, 71,000 miles, £8,495. Totally original, timewarp, lovingly restored Mk3 capri. Unmolested and original, drives superbly. Real head turner. Interior totally original and in excellent condition, dry stored and loved. Please call 07887479068, Suffolk. 11685

CAPRI 2.8



1986, 109,000 miles, £12,000. Fantastic investment opportunity, Finished in best colour combination. Fantastic car throughout needs nothing. Full MoT. Looks and drives fantastically. Please call 07768 823289, Norwich. 11660

CAPRI 2.8I



1986, 119k miles, £8,000. Track day prepped. Lowered, Polybushed, rear location brackets. Willwood fronts discs rear, braided hoses. Rebuilt engine with tubular headers and capri sport 3" system. New fuel tank/pump/filter/brake pads/battery. Mot 7.10.19. Please call 07783 580653, Surrey. 11688

HILLMAN

MINX MKII



1966, 64,000 miles, £8,500. MK5 1725cc, manual, new and no welding or rust with all original panels body shell like new and new chroming. Please call 07852 916290, Tyne Wear.

HONDA

CIVIC



1993, £2,500. New MoT, 5 speed manual, professionally converted, chrome bar, tonneau cover, 17" allov wheels, sunroof and excellent condition throughout. Please call 07596 619408, Sussex. 11578

JAGUAR

V8 XJ8



£1,850 0NO. 3.2 V8 XJ8 in very good condition. Full service history, topaz metallic with perfect cashmere leather interior, electric sunroof, CD player and built in telephone, 4 new tyres, personal plate included, cherished from new, MoT till June 2020 and no advisories. Please call 07598 791860. 11654





X100



160,000 miles, POA. Certified heritage, chassis 001173, 73 units before publicly sold vehicle. Very clean for age and used as a daily driver. Please call 07864 931405.

XJ8 3.2 V8



1997, 81,000 miles, £1,895. Original arctic white, beige leather, well maintained, immaculate ex wedding car, private reg, running on 18in Wolfrace 10 spoke alloys (XJR spec), engine bay immaculate. Lovely show car and must be seen with full MoT. Please call 07891 431533, Leicestershire 11323

XK150



1961, 3,100 miles, £68,500. In red, matching numbers, previous total restoration, now recomissioned after 15 year storage. New wiring harness, new ancillaries, professionally rebuilt. Very late and ready to enjoy. Please call 608 876 6768, Wisconsin. 11931

JOWETT

EIGHT



1937, **£7**,**500**. Re-upholstered, unique model and blue/black. Please call 01484 420 902, Huddersfield (T). 11733

JAVELIN



1952, £13,950. Concourse condition. Please call 01484 420 902. Huddersfield (T). 11737

MAZDA

MX5 ISOLA LIMITED EDITION



2000, 90,500 miles, £2,400. 1.6 with hard top roof, lovely looking car in classic red, MoT June 2020, undersealed, comes with hardtop, tonneau cover and sony radio/CD/ Aux and needs to be seen to be appreciated. Please call 07835877345.

MX5 MK1



1995, 78,000 miles, £3,595. New mohair, 5 spoke S type alloys, huge service history, full MoT, no expense spared and 1 previous owner from new. Please call 07542 924607, West Yorkshire.

MERCEDES-BENZ

280CE



1977, 102,500 miles, £7,950. Exceptional condition throughout. MoT to July 2020 and a recent service. Please call 07836 251000, Brighton.

C180



1994, 71,000 miles, £2,000 Ovno. Full years MoT, cloth interior, excellent condition inside and out. Drives well, electric windows and taxed. Please call 07892 915888, Kent. 11745

SLK 230



59,000 miles, £2,900. Full MoT, full service history, AMG wheels exhuast and skirts plus private plate K666 SLK. Please call 01736 810033, Cornwall. 11716

SLK 320

2001, 113,500 miles, £1,575. 51 plate, 2 lady owners, 6 speed, full electric pack, full leather, power top, AMG, alloys, MoT July, 14 service stamps and great value. Please call 07791 611072. Glos.

MG

COSTELLO V8 GT



POA. One owner from new and this is the mk2 model with weber carb. Original invoice from Costello engineering in March 1974. Currently being re commissioned by us, having been in storage for 25 years. Please call 01844 281700, Oxon. (T).

MGB ROADTSER



1963, 54,000 miles, £17,995. First of all what a lovely example. An older restoration built to a relatively standard spec but for an Unleaded head conversion. Just 5 former keepers from new with a wonderful history file and with a credible mileage. Please call 01623 411476, Nottinghamshire (T). 11718

MGB ROADSTER



1972, 46,000 miles, £7,950. Tax exempt, full engine rebuild and converted to 12 volt battery and full electronic ignition. Very reliable and in good condition. Extensive history and all MoT certificates. Please call 07790 615143. 11512

MGTD



£22,500. Red with leather interior, weather equipment including double duck hood, outstanding condition on body, chassis and mechanics. UK car from new and a multi show winner. Please call 07885 519770, Lancaster. 10245

MGTF



1954, 89,000 miles, £23,995. An original English classic which was superbly restored with new wood in the 80's. Recent new clutch, gearbox overhaul and new tyres. Please call 07836 351699, North Devon. 11853

MINI

COOPER



1989, £2,750 Ono. Flame red, original panels and sills. Runs and drives well, original interior, chrome features added and needs some cosmetic work, worth a look. Please call 07970 273201. 11744



ITALIAN JOB



1993, 72,000 miles, £4,750. Only 1.750 were made 1000 to the UK market 750 to the Italian, MoT until August 2020. Own it since 2010. Very good condition. Please call 07519 228096, Surrey.

MORRIS

MARINA 1800 TC COUPE



1972, 89,000 miles, £4,850. Stored 18 years, re commisioned with many modern upgrades, tested March 20, good tyres, has all the badges and trim, original sills, chrome all good and no damage. Interior fine and presentable. Please call 01452 854361, Gloucestershire. 11870

MINOR

1963, POA. 2 door saloon, partly restored, Winter project, interesting registration. Please call 01618 811840, Manchester. 11908

MINOR

1934, £4,500 Ono. Green body with black wings and chrome radiator grille, needs some attention. Please call 07754 559781. 11751

MINOR 1000 CONVERTIBLE



1969, 42,230 miles, £10,000. Old English White, Charles Ware Conversion. MoT June 2020. New front seats, carpets. Please call 07879 232231, Essex.

A Charles Ware Morris Minor can turn heads at just 5 mph As eye catching as the Abbey or the Royal

Crescent, Cat Heale and her immaculate Morris Minor Convertible (with her dogs Gertie and Naughty George) regularly attract the tourist camera lens in Bath.

Go to www.morrisminor.org.uk/morrisminorstories for the full story.



20 Clothier Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 5PS Sales and Restoration: (0117) 300 3754 Parts: (0117 300 3753

MINOR TRAVELLER



£6,250. MoT until 24th October 2020. No advisories, 1098cc engine, tow bar fitted, it has done less than a 1,000 miles since the gearbox was rebuilt and new clutch fitted, brakes done too. It was done professionally. It is a very good useable car. Please call 07939 264653, Hampshire. 11885

OXFORD



1955. £15.000. This is a beautiful and extremely rare car. The bodywork and interior are in pristine condition and car drives splendidly. Beige in colour. Vehicle has a vast array of supporting documents inc mots dating back to 1973. Various receipts including the very first purchase from new. Please call 01236 723367, Nr Glasgow.

NISSAN

200 SX



1939, 102,000 miles, £9,995. Rare 5-speed manual, all still original, MoT June 2020. Too good for breaking. Old classic sports car needs TLC. Selling due to ill health. Please call 07810 247941, Kings Lvnn. 11774

FIGARO



1991, 84,671 km, £4,900. A very well looked after example of Lapis grey Nissan Figaro. The car features the upgraded alloy wheels, has benefited from top end engine overhaul, brake service, electrics overhaul, leather seat refurbishment and gearbox service. A practical classic that can be used every day. Please call 01822 855407.

PEUGEOT

106 ESCAPADE



1996, 60,000 miles, £795. 5-door, 3rd owner, 5-speed, Hi fi sunroof, etc. In lovely original condition and seeing is a must. Please call 078608 26464, Leicester.

PORSCHE

911



36,000 miles, £55,000. I am the 2nd owner, for 23 years. Comprehensive document/service file, G50 Box, Electric hood and seats and a new MoT. Please call 07710 730356, Sussex. 11667

RILEY

RILEY



1953, 17,196 miles, £9,900 ONO. Clean original condition, engineer owned and maintained, spare parts and manuals etc with original registration number. Please call 01606 42569, Cheshire.

ROLLS-ROYCE

SILVER SHADOW II



1980, 50,822 miles, £23,995. The original service schedule/record book is present for the vehicle, showing the supplying dealer to be Heronrossleigh in Edinburgh, purchased date March 1980. The service book has been stamped 30 times. Please call 01623 411476, Nottinghamshire (T).



ROVER

2000 P6



1973, 43,000 miles, £5,750. Automatic. Please call 01484 420 902, Huddersfield (T). 11734

P4



1960, **£7,999**. There are 28 old MoT's dating back to the mid 80's in the history file. New recon steering box, new water pump and recently serviced. Finished in striking green over black this car is a wonderful opportunity. Please call 02380 766870, Southampton (T).

SAAB

96



1972, 92,000 miles, £7,500. Sienna beige ready to drive anywhere, new clutch fitted 2019, brakes relined, new complete original Saab exhaust maintained by Saab specialist. All paint excellent and chrome mint. Please call 01935 425509. Somerset. 11897

TOYOTA

COROLLA



1990, 30,700 miles, £2,000. MoT April 2020, one family ownership prior to current owner, cambelt replaced, original service and instruction books, old but nippy and has PAS, lovely drive and condition in metallic grey and 5 speed manual. Please call 0161 748 4924, Greater Manchester. 11579

MR2 MKI



1990, 31,096 miles, £8,150. Still with present owner from new and all original stunning condition. This lovely car has 3 best show trophies. Please call 01925 766866. Warrington.

TRIUMPH

2000 TWO-DOOR AUTO



1971, £12,500. Professionally built over 24 years, runs really nicely, reliable transport, new parts fitted. Unique vehicle converted to two doors. NZ import. Featured in Triumph World and at the NEC. For more info and offers, call 07799 555886, Cambridgeshire. 10179

BUY ANY CLASSIC FREEPHONE 0800 246 1800 www.ibuyanyclassic.co.uk james@ibuyanyclassic.co.uk

DOLOMITE 1850



1974, 57,000 miles, £6,750. Completely stripped and rebuilt with new or reconditioned parts over 35 years. Unmarked black leather interior, professional bare metal respray bills for 6k, superb and ready to show. Please call 07949 492377, Yorkshire.

SPITFIRE MKIII



1967, £11,995. Extensive body off restoration. New rear wings, rear valence, sills and floor. Doors re skinned and perfect bonnet with new carpets and door and seat covers. Brakes and suspension overhauled. Please call 01904 488155. Yorkshire.

STAG



1973, £P0A. White with Black Hard Top and brand new hood. Full engine rebuild and recently serviced with new disc pads, rear shockers, various steering joints and suspension bushes, new high powered alternator, new quality battery. No overheating problems, even in the hottest days Please call 07855 444798. 11568

VAUXHALL

ASTRA MKII



1985, 81,700 miles, £1,795, L1200 OHC, rare sky line blue with royal blue cloth/interior, MoT May 2020, lovely condition and a manual gearbox. Please call 07980 112391, Kent.

CAVALIER



1983, 70,000 miles, £850. MoT Jan 2020. Very original. Runs and drives fine requires cosmetic work. Driver's rear arch rusty. Solid otherwise. Please call 07555 437070, Torquay.

VOLKSWAGEN

BEETLE 1300



1971, POA. In very good overall condition, had paintwork and improvements in the past still excellent. Brakes tyres and all mechanics good' new battery' great daily driver. Please call 07503 982055, Surrey.

BORA 1.6 SE



2000, 126,000 miles, £600. Good condition, 2 owners from new (same family), FSH, MoT May 2020, removable tow bar, 2 keys and handbooks. Please call 01507 526500, Horncastle Lincs.

WILLYS

OVERLAND



1927, £25,999. Not required MoT or tax, manual, 2200cc, petrol, refurbished 7 years ago, dickie seat the back, big headlights, running board, spare wheel, fitted picnic box and comes with whippet mascot. Please call 02380 766870, Southampton (T).



TIPS, TRICKS AND NOSTALGIA FROM A LIFETIME IMMERSED IN OLD CARS BY ANDREW EVERETT

NO CLASSIC FUTURE FOR MODERN CARS?

A FEW STORIES recently have conspired to convince me that a lot of modern cars – especially expensive ones - might not be worth having. The first story involved a well known German prestige (whatever that is) brand and its Bosch high pressure diesel pump. This sits at the back of the engine and the first I heard of this issue was when such a fantastic machine spluttered to a halt after a few days of deteriorating performance.

A trip to the main dealer on a breakdown truck resulted in an estimate of £6000 - yes, SIX GRAND – to replace a part that used to last 200,000 miles and 35 years without so much as a squeak on a W123 Mercedes. What happened to this pump (as has happened on many more, including one only this week as I write) is that the finely machined pump internals started to break up. Small particles went unfiltered back into the fuel tank, back to the pump, back into the supply line, into the fuel rail and into all four injectors. This went in a vicious circle as the recycled fuel damaged the

pump more, increasing amounts of fine steel swarf were pumped though very finely machined parts and the result was that six grand bill. Pump, injectors, fuel rail, fuel tank, lines - it was all contaminated scrap.

Okay, it could be repaired for about £1500 with good used parts, but you do have to question the quality or suitability of this stuff. I mean, think back to that W123 240D Merc or a Peugeot 504 diesel, out in the middle of some African continent and running on recycled chip fat, heating oil, rape seed oil and maybe even a bit of pump diesel drawn from a rusty old tank. They don't fall to bits.

Another great idea that isn't is the dual mass flywheel. I have yet to hear anybody explain what these are good for, apart from generating an impressive invoice. They arrived in the late 1980s and those early examples were of course very well made and capable of a good 250,000 miles. This is because the manufacturer couldn't envisage the part failing on an expensive car within 50 or 60,000 miles – how would that

reflect on them?

Now it's commonplace for a dual mass flywheel to be rattling at 60,000 and finished by 100,000, another consumable on a throwaway car. Drive a car from 1976, say a Princess 2200 or a Cortina, and marvel at how light the clutch is, how well it bites and how the flywheel never needs to be replaced. Worn the clutch down to the rivets, Sir? Just give the flywheel a quick rub with a strip of emery paper, fit the new clutch and it's job done. A modern petrol version of our German wonder machine with four cylinders, 2-litres and about 140bhp will need a £500 flywheel to go with the £350 clutch, and who's going to pay that when the car's only worth £1500? Not me.

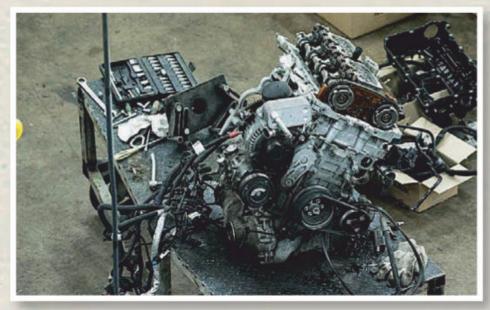
Then we get into electronics. Someone mentioned recently that the reversing lights didn't work on their 2011 Wunderkind 2.0d. Both of them were dead. So was it a fuse or a reversing light switch? No, neither. The problem was the light control module behind the dash, a black box that controls all this stuff. Multiplex wiring and CanBus means that you can't just run a 12 volt and an earth from the reversing light switch to the rear lights, so it was another module plus fitting and coding. £500 to replace with a new module, and as for used, good luck with getting the right part number.

Then we have timing chains. These seem to have replaced cam belts wholesale, and on the face of it that seems a good idea. Think back to Rover 2000s, Maxis, CIH Vauxhall-Opels, Imps and Datsun Bluebirds that ran

until they would run no more and the timing chain would still be suitable for hauling the Titanic's anchor. They just didn't wear out or break. But look at the timing chain of a modern engine and it's a toss up whether you'd even bother using it on an exercise bike or a lavatory flush. Tensioner rails made from plastic rather than aluminium must have seemed like a good idea to somebody, but plastic becomes brittle when subjected to hot/cold cycles and a few years in hot engine oil. And of course brittle plastic breaks.

A modern car has many advantages – they're very safe in a crash, go quite well, are full of gadgets we're told we need (what the hell is infotainment anyway?) and apparently they are very good on fuel too, although an Austin Montego 2.0 diesel could do a solid 45mpg 30 years ago. On the flip side, modern cars also ride harshly and are highly strung; witness 200bhp from 2-litre diesels pulling two ton cars. Witness also the line of dead Vauxhall Insignias I saw at a breakers yard just last week, all virtually immaculate, all with dead CDTi engines, and all too expensive to repair.

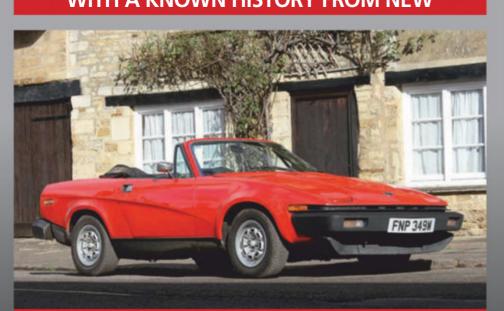
And of course ten years from now they'll be even worse, even more dull to drive and generally more offensive to look at. They are generally too fragile and needy in middle age, and cars from 2019 will all be £3995 ticking bombs, looking for the last owner who hasn't got a hope in hell in doing the head gasket or replacing the clutch on the drive. Those days are well and truly over, and none of them will ever be a classic in my eyes.



NEXT ISSUE IN GUSSICS







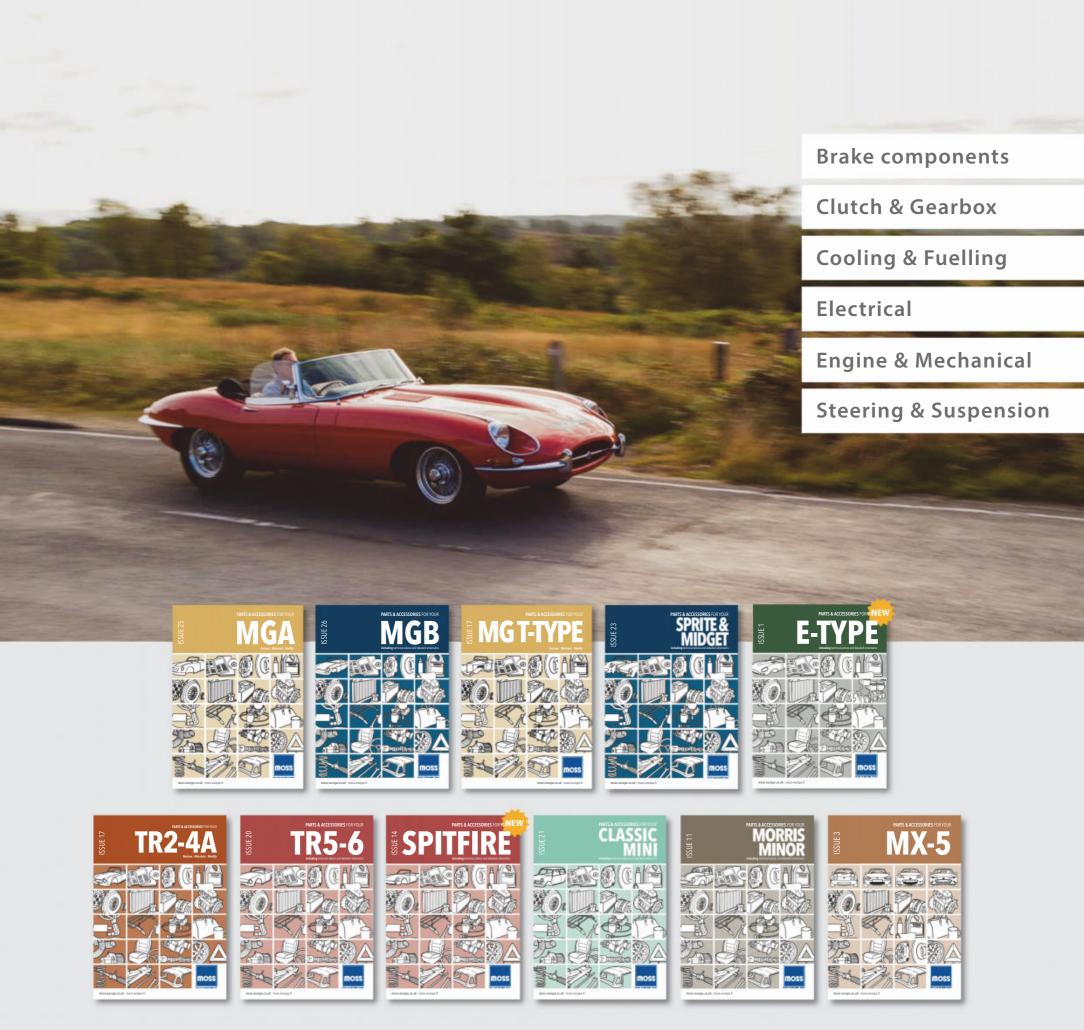
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FORD SIERRA RS COSWORTH
TWO ABSOLUTELY STUNNING EXAMPLES

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